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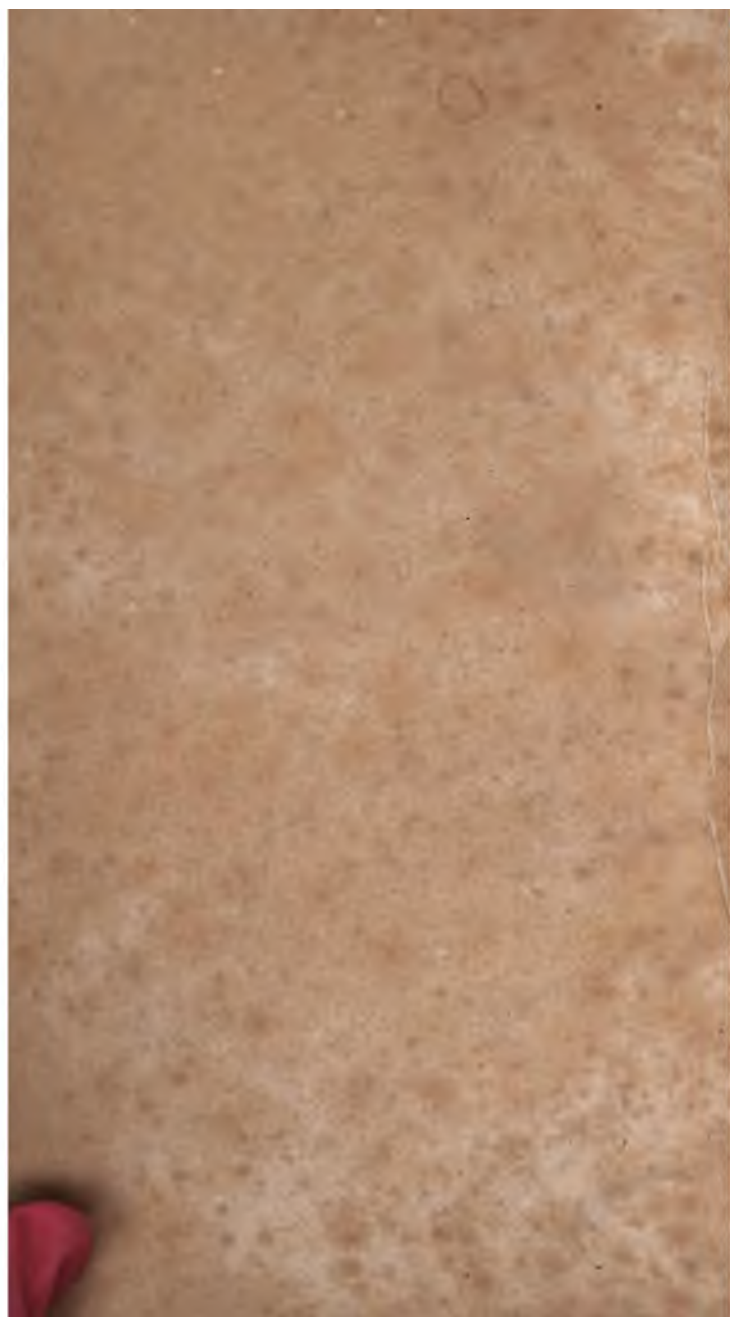
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THE
GREAT IRON WHEEL
REVIEWED.

THE
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REVIEWED:
OR,
A DEFENCE OF THE METHODIST E. CHURCH
AGAINST
THE CALUMNIOUS ASSAULTS
OF
REV. F. A. ROSS AND REV. A. CONVERSE, D.D.

BY
FRANCIS HODGSON, D.D.

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas, they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."—1 Pet. ii. 12.



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P R E F A C E .

THE author of the following essays has no apology to offer for their publication, or republication. His sole object, in this brief preface, is to record a few additional facts, which may aid in forming a just appreciation of the controversy. The reader is informed in the first article, that the strictures entitled "The Great Iron Wheel," were written by Rev. F. A. Ross, of Tennessee, a Presbyterian minister, and published first in the Calvinistic Magazine.

This Magazine was published some years ago, and discontinued. It has been very recently revived. The motives which prompted to its resuscitation, are thus stated in the first number, for the present year: "In the spring of 1845, four gentlemen were led to inquire, whether they were not called upon, in the state of things then existing within the bounds of the Synod of Tennessee, to revive the old Calvinistic Magazine. They knew that, for the twelve previous years, the Methodists had been allowed a clear field to abuse and misrepresent Presbyterians, and to decoy into their own church the members of the Presbyterian Churches and families. They knew that almost nothing had been done, during this period, to refute those slanders, and disabuse the public mind of these misrepresentations. They knew that

Presbyterians were not awake as they should be, to the secret machinations and dangerous influence of Methodism; nor were they informed, as they should have been, in regard to the glorious distinctive doctrines of their own creed, and the excellence of their own noble Confession of Faith."

It is scarcely necessary for me to say, that I have no confidence in these statements respecting the Methodists. They are valuable only as showing that the great object of this Magazine is, to promote Calvinism and Presbyterianism by opposing Methodism.

Mr. Ross, it appears, is not the only individual directly responsible for the editorial contents of this periodical. It has four editors, all Presbyterian ministers—they are: "Isaac Anderson, Fred. A. Ross, Jas. King, and Jas. McChain." Nor can we restrict the responsibility to these ministers. We are told, in the editorial address, that "in October, 1845, they laid the subject before the Synod of Tennessee, and meeting with their cordial approbation and co-operation, began the publication of the present series of the Magazine, in 1846." Since then, this Synod has approved of the course of the Magazine, by formal resolutions.

The editors also say: "Thus far our subscription list has been and still is increasing; our sphere of influence is enlarging; our strongest articles are copied and commended in a number of the most respectable papers of the Union; our work is supported by the name and pen of some of the first and best ministers out of our Synod; and our churches are working up to a higher appreciation of our own glorious Calvinistic Creed and Confession of Faith, and a better understanding of the errors, follies, and dangers of Methodism." At the conclusion of the same number, they add the following:—"With great pleasure we say, that, in many places, *'both'* branches of the Presbyterian Church have

patronized the Calvinistic Magazine. And in this connection, it will be gratifying to all our subscribers to know, that we are promised contributions from one of the most esteemed minds at Princeton." In the number for December, 1846, we have more particular information respecting this Princeton correspondent. The editors say: "We are happy to be able to inform our readers, that one of the editors has received a letter from the Rev. Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, in which, in compliance with our request, he promises to write something for our Magazine, feeling this to be a call of duty which he is not at liberty to decline, though he has so many and so pressing claims to meet."

The author is convinced that Methodism is about to pass through another severe and widely extended conflict with the Presbyterians, and other Calvinistic denominations. And he is encouraged to hope, especially by the following preamble and resolutions, that the feeble efforts he has made, amid many pressing pastoral duties, to defend the church of his fathers, in which he is counted worthy to be a minister, will not be wholly unavailing.

"WHEREAS the Rev. F. A. Ross, editor of the Calvinistic Magazine, a Presbyterian periodical, published in Abingdon, Va., made, not long since, a most gross and unchristian assault upon the polity, the ministry, and the membership of the entire Methodist E. Church, in the United States, in a series of articles entitled 'The Great Iron Wheel:'

"And whereas the said articles were republished by Dr. Converse, editor of the 'Christian Observer,' a Presbyterian paper, and also in whole, or in part, with commendation, in the 'Christian Chronicle,' a periodical of the Baptist Church, both of which papers are published in this city:

"And whereas the Rev. Dr. Hodgson, of the Methodist E. Church, has thoroughly reviewed, and, as we believe, ably

and triumphantly refuted the positions assumed by the assailant, Mr. Ross, in a highly intellectual and logical style, and in a gentlemanly and Christian spirit:

"Therefore resolved, by the Preachers' Meeting of the M. E. Church of Philadelphia, that we approve and recommend to the Christian public the review by Dr. H., now about to be issued in pamphlet form, as a clear and conclusive refutation of Mr. Ross's foul aspersions of our beloved Zion."

THE GREAT IRON WHEEL.

NO. I.

THE above is the title of a series of articles on Methodism, from the pen of the Rev. A. Ross, of the Presbyterian Church. These articles contain a violent assault upon our system of Church government. In proof that I have not characterized them too strongly, I propose to present some of the hard sayings in which the writer has indulged. He repeatedly styles our system a "despotism." He speaks of it thus:—"Why, in essential character, it is the very system of the Jesuits of Rome! It is, in principle, a crushing military despotism."—Again, "Just look at it, and you see it is a perfect system of passive obedience, and non-resistance." Again, "The reflecting man must see that all real liberty of thought and action is destroyed as truly by this system, as by the ecclesiastical system of Rome—as by the drill of an army—as by any despotism upon the face of the earth." He addresses to the Rev. S. Patten, editor of a Methodist periodical, the following challenge:—"And will he then favor us with a definition and illustration of Russian, Turkish and Chinese despotism, or will he tell us where, in any army on earth, there is anything akin to this irresponsible power wielded in the Methodist Episcopal Church?" He tells us that if this system were allowed to work out its designs and tendencies—and he thanks God that it is not "because we are in free America"—the members of our church, as distinguished from the ministry, would be the "merest puppets"—that they might "be made to dress alike to order, in stiff

collars, on one side, and dove-colored bonnets without ribbons on the other—doing identically the same thing,” where the system operates, “from the St. John’s to the Rio Grande.” He anticipates and answers an objection. “But perhaps some man tells us, ‘You said the system of Methodism is, in essence, that of the Jesuits of Rome: that is a hard saying; Jesuitism is the worst form of Roman Catholicism.’ Yes, examine for yourselves, and you will see that Methodism and Jesuitism are essentially the same. Methodism is not yet so bad as Jesuitism. Let us not be, however, thereby deceived. Methodism is hardly fifty years old in this country.—But things require time to show themselves.” Severe as are these denunciations, they are not quite severe enough to express fully the condemnation which, in the estimation of this Presbyterian minister, Methodism deserves. “The Methodist system,” he says, “is antichrist. For it is the very identical priestly power which has crushed and trodden under foot the liberty wherewith Christ doth make free in every age of the world.”

He comes down in great wrath against our class meetings, in particular, and utters, with other things, the following:—“The Class meeting is the drill muster ground of Methodism, and it is, in principle, and tendency, and actual results, the Roman Catholic Confessional.” He pronounces it “a system of iniquity,” a “foul thing”—“a disgrace to the day in which we live, and a burlesque and dishonor upon the word of God.” Again, “The Class meeting Confessional, if enforced, as Mr. Wesley planned it, and as it is in the discipline, would make the Methodist Church the greatest school of scandal in the world.”

He also selects, for special reprobation our financial system, and claims to have established the “position” that Methodism is a great money power—that the itinerant preachers have secured the control of real estate in Methodist houses, &c., estimated at some four millions of dollars—that they have entirely in their management other capital, reckoned at over six hundred thousand dollars—and that they have the ordering and disposal of all collections at class meetings, love-feasts, quarterly and camp-meetings—in fine, the entire income of Methodism, which, in the aggregate sum, must be prodigious, and increasing every year.”

He not only endeavors to render our system odious, but also grossly and grievously impugns the moral character of the Methodist, both of the ministry and the laity.

Respecting the *actual results* of class meetings, he makes the following statement:—"Confession, therefore, in the Roman and Methodist systems, must tend to a callous conscience. Nine out of ten of the readers of this article will say, if they are not Methodists, 'Yes. It is true. We have often remarked a peculiar insensibility, as a characteristic of the Methodist common mass, (whatever many exceptions there certainly are from education and refined associations in life,) a peculiar insensibility to moral honor and integrity of character.'"

He speaks of the Methodists in the most contemptuous manner:—"The submission of Methodists to their ministry, is, even now, lamentable and astounding. They submit to their immense itineracy being quartered upon them, like an army of soldiers, without any will of their own, whether they shall come, or stay, or go.—They submit to be controlled in their reading, so that there is a virtual censorship of the press over them. They are drilled to prefer hearing some old hiccupping driveller, who has 'got religion,' to Dr. Chalmers, if he is a Presbyterian. They submit to be controlled in the cut of their dress. They are drilled to extraordinary sameness of or expression of face, and tone of voice. They are drilled to believe they verily do God service to be Methodists, whatever else they be: to uphold Methodism through thick and thin—right or wrong—precisely upon the principle on which political parties are sustained. For they are drilled to gather around the preacher in the pulpit, as around the demagogue on the stump, and hurrah over the merest bag of wind, as full answer to facts and arguments against Methodism. They are drilled to believe that it is right to hate with personal, private malignity, every man who speaks against Methodism; and to propagate against him any and every hear-say gabble that may create odium, as lawful defence of Methodism. Methodism is to be sustained, and the end sanctifies the means. This is the identical spirit of Rome. But like causes must produce like effects. The Methodist ministry, in its class meeting system, is Rome and its Confessional, and like priests like people."

There remains yet a choice specimen of ribaldry, expressive of the utter contempt with which this minister of Christ regards those members of the Methodist Church who conform to the obligations of the Class meeting. They are represented by the following names:—"Brother Tommy Love to Tell it, and Brother Christopher Can't Keep it, Sister Sally Slander-wink, and Sister Susan Slacktwisted."

He acknowledges that he has used ridicule and expressed contempt, but he declines any apology. He justifies his course in this respect. "We hold with Pascal," says he, "in what he says to the Jesuits, and we conclude with his words, which we address to Methodist preachers:—'Indeed, reverend sirs, there is a vast difference between laughing at religion, and laughing at those who profane it by their extravagant opinions, &c.'"

I have said that he impugns the moral character of the Methodist ministry, as well as that of the laity. He represents them as making gain of godliness, and applies to them the following text of Scripture, 1 Peter ii. 5: "And through covetousness, shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you." Mr. Wesley, in particular, comes in for a liberal share of abuse.

He endeavors to excite the public mind against us by representing our system as dangerous to the civil and religious liberties of the country. He exclaims, "It is astounding! it is astounding that any set of men, after the American Revolution, should have dared to fabricate and set in motion this great Iron Wheel of Itineracy." He invokes the "Genius of America," and puts in the mouth of his oracle the following response:—"The Methodist system is death to all the free institutions for which Washington fought and freemen died." He says, "It is sometimes asked with great greenness, what business have we, the editors of the Calvinistic Magazine, with the Methodist system? We answer—just the same business we would have, if a man living in the same house with us had a barrel of gunpowder in his room. We think we should have the right to get that powder out of the house. So we have a right to expose popery and prelacy and Methodism, as dangerous to the civil and religious liberties of our country." He not only calls upon Methodists to do away their system, and attempts to rally the community at

large to the patriotic work of removing it, but also appeals to the magistracy of the land against it.—I commend the following to the sober attention of the reader :—"The Reformation was to achieve deliverance from the money power held by the Romish priests. And the blood of patriot martyrs, in England, and upon every battle-field of our Revolution, was shed,—to make kings and lords and bishops give back to the people control over their own money. And yet in defiance of this voice from heaven, and this blood from the earth, Methodist preachers in America have dared to make themselves, by absolute usurpation of the rights of the people, a great moneyed aristocracy. We call upon Methodists to overturn this despotism. But if they will not hear—we then call upon the guardians of our civil and religious rights, to speak out everywhere, until the people shall understand this usurpation, and arrest it."

Such is the nature of an attack made upon the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the year of our Lord 1847, by a minister in good standing in the Presbyterian Church.

These articles have been republished in the *Christian Observer*, a Presbyterian paper of the New School, published in this city, and edited by the Rev. A. Converse, D. D. This Editor endorses the statements and arguments of Mr. Ross, without any exception or qualification, and thus makes himself personally responsible for them.—He pronounces the articles "able" and "excellent," "just and discriminating." He tells us that Mr. Ross has presented "a very lucid view of the powers vested in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church." He talks of the "despotic features of the Methodist system," and styles it "a government clothed with absolute power." He also informs us that he commenced copying the article on class-meetings, "in compliance with a request of some of his aged patrons."

He thinks that his "Methodist friends ought by no means to regard this discussion as an attack upon their church." He would have it regarded as a respectful discussion of abstract questions. Let us so understand it then. What are the questions proposed for amicable discussion? Whether Methodism is identical in principle and tendency and results with the worst form of Romanism—whether Methodist preachers are usurpers and despots—whether the Methodist people

have any liberty, or are mere "puppets," doing the will of their ministers—whether Methodist class-meetings are identical with the Romish Confessional—whether they are a system of iniquity, a foul thing, a disgrace to the age in which we live, and a burlesque on the word of God—whether gross indecencies are practised in them as a development of the system—whether, as a natural result of class-meetings, the Methodists are characterized by callous consciences, and a *peculiar* insensibility to moral honor and integrity of character, with the exception of those only, or some of those, who have been favored with the advantages of "education, and refined associations in life"—whether the Methodists are "drilled," by their ministers, to uphold Methodism through thick and thin—right or wrong—precisely upon the principle on which political parties are sustained—acting upon the maxim that "the end sanctifies the means," to hate with private personal malignity every man who speaks against Methodism; and to "propagate against him any hearsay gabble that may create odium, as a lawful defence of Methodism"—whether Methodism is dangerous to civil and religious liberty—whether in case the Methodists themselves will not do it away, the magistrates ought not to interpose their official authority and put it down. These are some of the very respectful questions which we are to be ready to discuss, in the most bland and deferential manner, Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse and his "aged patrons," whom he calls "very respectable," taking the affirmative. If this be not an attack upon both Methodism and Methodists, I cannot imagine what would constitute such an attack.—Will Dr. Converse just give us a specimen by way of illustrating the difference between an "attack" and the articles of Mr. Ross?—Indeed, he has himself so imbibed the spirit of these articles, that, after bespeaking our acquiescence in their publication, he, in the very next paragraph, offers us a gross insult. He says: "In these remarks we prefer no charge against the despotic features of the Methodistsystem," and then proceeds to give his reason for this forbearance, "A government with absolute power, may be the best in the world for children, even for grown children, if they have not been sufficiently taught, enlightened and elevated to be capable of self-government." We may be thankful that through the able and dis-

Interested services of Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse and his "aged patrons," we have now a prospect of being sufficiently taught, enlightened and elevated to be capable of self-government, and entitled to higher consideration than grown children. Who knows but that we may yet be raised to an equality with Presbyterians in this respect!

The editor of the Christian Observer deprecates a controversy with his friends of the Methodist E. Church. We cannot accommodate his love of peace in this instance. We cannot suffer our good to be evil spoken of as it is in his paper. Mr. Ross is distant. Had not his articles been copied into the Christian Observer, they would, we have reason to believe, have been read by few in Philadelphia. We shall hold him and his "aged patrons" responsible for them.

There is an aspect of the case not a little painful, and yet we must look at it. A Presbyterian minister writes the articles in question. They are published in a respectable Presbyterian periodical. Another Presbyterian periodical copies them, at the request of some of its "aged and respectable patrons," and spreads them far and wide before the community, giving them the influence of special editorial commendation.—And no Presbyterian minister, and, so far as I know, no Presbyterian layman, utters his protest against any of the imputations or inferences by which we are so grossly disparaged. Are we, then, to conclude that they are an expression of the opinions entertained of us by the Presbyterian church generally? If they are, let them be published. Let them be copied into other papers and sent all over the land. Those who entertain such opinions have a right to publish them. And if Methodism cannot stand any ordeal that the Presbyterians can subject it to, let it go down. But we have one favor to ask of them, which is, that, while they thus regard our system of government and worship, and our ministry and membership, they will cease to call us brethren, and to propose fraternal intercourse with us as Methodists. Will they call the Jesuits of the Church of Rome brethren? Will they hold professed and visible fellowship with Antichrist? In the number of the Christian Observer containing the hardest things that Mr. Ross had said, there is also published an account of a revival, in which, according to the writer, "Old School and New School Presbyterian, Method-

ist and Baptist ministers, have preached, and prayed, and wept together," &c. Presbyterians of both schools thus give their public sanction to a system as, at least, evangelical, which Dr. Converse, and his aged patrons, regard as having its origin in the "Spirit," as being based upon the "principles," and as developing the practical results of Romanism, yea, of Jesuitism, which they consider the "worst form of Roman Catholicism," and also as dangerous to the civil liberties of our country. And yet this same Dr. Converse pronounces the information of this union and its results, "Cheering intelligence," and publishes it.—Verily he is a charitable man! There is but little reason to doubt that we should find him and his brethren of kindred spirit hugging the "scarlet whore"—"the mother of abominations," (as they understand the Romish hierarchy to be,) if she would only consent and submit to their embraces. We say to these men that candor and consistency have some claims upon them. We can bear to be called Jesuits, despots, usurpers, puppets, Pharisees, and the like, by those who believe us to be such, but we cannot endure that they should call us brethren at the same time. We are too strongly reminded of a certain interview between Joab and Amasa, in which the former addressed the latter with "Art thou in health, my brother?" and then "smote him under the fifth rib." It is due to Mr. Ross to say that he is not chargeable with this inconsistency. And until Dr. Converse disavows the sentiments of Mr. Ross, I, for one, shall loathe any expressions of fraternal regard for Methodists, or of respect for Methodism, which he may make. They will be to me as the slime with which the Boa Constrictor covers his prey to facilitate the process of deglutition.

It is also to be hoped that, when Presbyterian agents for the Protestant Association come along, they will not be allowed to ask any farther sympathy or aid from the Methodist E. Church, or to insult the ears of our congregations by appeals to our love of civil and religious liberty. I hope they will candidly call our ministers Jesuits and our people dupes, and so let the people know what they think of us. Some time since, when they were laboring to excite the Northern and Eastern sections of the Republic in view of the spread of Romanism in the Valley of the Mississippi, and its efforts to obtain the ascendancy, it was suggested that they were quite

as much alarmed at the spread of Methodism, and that a full disclosure of their motives would include a statement to this effect. This suggestion would seem to be confirmed. Be this as it may, if the articles of Mr. Ross contain the views of Presbyterians generally, consistency demands of them that, hereafter, they include Methodism in their philippics against Romish despotism and intolerance, and present us and the Roman Catholics as common objects of apprehension and antagonism.

Let the Presbyterians proceed in this work of identifying Methodism and Romanism, and the public will soon know how much importance to attach to their appeals when they attempt to rally the hosts of Protestantism. Indeed, they cannot adopt any plan more likely to advance the interests of Romanism. The people of this country have seen the workings of Methodism, and they are not afraid of it. Presbyterians cannot make them afraid of it. They can trust it: and they will be glad to be relieved of their anxiety about the plans and the spread of Romanism, by the welcome assurance, from such "a respectable source," that it is no more to be dreaded than Methodism.—Moreover, when they find that Methodism has been calumniated, they will receive what Presbyterians have to say of popery with liberal allowance for misrepresentation, and will find no difficulty in extending their sympathy from the calumniated to any other party of whom the same things are affirmed.

NO. II.

THE late Rev. George G. Cookman, in his Centenary speech, delivered in N. Y., compared the system of Methodism to a machine, and in carrying out his figure, assigned to the several parts of the system their relation to each other. Said the orator:—"Let us carefully note the admirable and astounding movements of this wonderful machine. You will perceive there are 'wheels within wheels.'

"1st. There is the great outer wheel of Episcopacy, which accomplishes its entire revolution once in four years. To this are attached twenty-eight smaller wheels, styled Annual

Conferences, moving round once a year ; to these are attached one hundred wheels, designated Presiding Elders, moving twelve hundred other wheels, termed Quarterly Conferences, every three months—to these are attached four thousand wheels styled Traveling Preachers, moving round once a month, and communicating motion to thirty thousand wheels called Class-Leaders, moving round once a week, and who, in turn, being attached to between seven and eight hundred thousand wheels, called Members, give a sufficient impulse to whirl them around every day."

This passage was copied by a writer in the Methodist Episcopalian, where it attracted the attention of Mr. Ross, who rejoiced over it as one who has taken great spoil. He parades it before his readers, with frenzied exultation, as authority for asserting that the economy of Methodism is an absolute despotism, in which all real liberty of thought and action is destroyed, and that the whole system moves in absolute control of the great outer wheel of Episcopacy. The unfairness,—the puerility of making such a use of this passage, must be apparent to every intelligent reader. What is more common than for speakers or writers to compare organizations for ecclesiastical, or benevolent, or any other purposes, to machinery ? And yet no one understands them to mean that these systems are despotic. The Presbyterian system of church government may be called a machine with just as much propriety as that of the Methodists, and for the very same reason, viz: that it is a system, one part acting upon another.

In adducing authority, we are obliged to be governed by the meaning of the writer quoted. But does Mr. Ross, or Dr. Converse, or any one, believe that the author of this highly rhetorical passage intended to say that the church government of the Methodists is an absolute despotism ?

Mr. Ross admits, ultimately, that it is a mere illustration, and should not be pressed too far ; and proposes to sustain his conclusion by other authorities. For this purpose he falls upon the speech of Mr. Hamline, (since elected and ordained a bishop,) delivered at the General Conference of 1844. He tells us that "Mr. Hamline asserted that suspension, removal, or deposition from office, in the Methodist church, is summary, without accusation, trial or formal sentence,—Ministerial, not judicial; that it is for no crime, generally for no misdemeanor, but for

being unacceptable; that most of the removals are by a sole agent, namely, by a bishop, a preacher, whose will is omnipotent in the premises; that the removing officer is not legally obliged to assign any cause for deposition. If he do so, it is through courtesy, and not of right; that the deposed officer has no appeal; that if indiscreetly or unnecessarily removed, he must submit, for there is no tribunal authorized to cure the error or rectify the wrong; and that he argued from these facts that the General Conference had the power to suspend the bishop [Bishop Andrew] in a summary manner—without trial."

There are some inaccuracies in this representation of Bishop Hamline's speech which I shall notice hereafter. At present, I wish to fix the attention of the reader upon the fact that Mr. Ross, instead of proving his position by this reference, completely overturns it. He undertakes to prove that the whole system moves in *absolute control of the Episcopacy*, and for this purpose, he adduces as authority a passage the very design of which, according to his own showing, was to prove that the *Episcopacy is entirely under the control of the General Conference*, and that the bishops are liable to be removed from office by it, in a summary manner—without trial. And, as if entirely unconscious of having refuted himself, he exclaims:—"There is the system—from the lips of a Methodist preacher—now a Methodist bishop." This "discriminating" writer can see no difference between the General Conference being under the control of the Episcopacy, and the Episcopacy being under the control of the General Conference. And the editor of the Christian Observer, and his aged patrons, are prepared to commend his argument as a "lucid exposition." It will take them a long time to put down Methodism by such logic.

To be very serious, it seems an almost incredible thing that any man, possessing ordinary intelligence, and having any reputation to sustain, should refer to this speech to prove that the bishops of the M. E. Church are clothed with absolute authority. Allow me to present one or two passages which Mr. Ross has no doubt read. In the progress of his speech, Mr. Hamline thus addressed the presiding bishop:—"Now, Mr. President, in legislation the bishop has not only peers, but more than peers. In clerical orders every man on this

floor is his equal, but in legislative functions his superior. Can you contribute the uplifting of a hand for or against a Conference act? You may not do it. The discipline, which we shape at pleasure, defies your touch. You may not, in this regard, breathe upon it. You may not spread the plaster upon a patch which we, *ad libitum*, apply to its weak parts. If the Conference, by a tie, fail to do what is desirable to be done, and (like the philosopher's starving brute, caught centrally between two heaps of hay) cannot escape from the dilemma, I believe it is doubted by the college of bishops whether the president can come to our rescue by a casting vote.

"This conference has *judicial* supremacy. It is a court of appeals beyond which no parties can travel for the cure of errors. It is the dernier resort, not only of appellants, but of original complainants. You, sir, must stand or fall by its sole decision. Nor has a bishop part or lot in its court action. He is constituted the judge of law in an inferior tribunal, but not here. His lips are sealed in this august body, and except when himself is concerned, he may not rise as an advocate either for the church or for an implicated party. So-naked, sir, of judicial prerogatives, is the bishop in this conference. Every member on the floor wears the ermine which you may not assume. Each of us blends in himself the functions of both judge and juryman, to which you are an utter stranger. And, in the meantime, you are liable, as I suppose, to be stripped, by us, of those other high prerogatives of which, by our countenance, you now hold investiture. You see, then, that as a bishop you are both elevated and depressed. When you went up you went down," &c.

This is but a part of what is said in the same strain; and this speech Mr. Ross says had the sanction of the General Conference, contributed to Mr. Hamline's election to the Episcopacy, and certainly deserved the mitre. He did not suppose that his readers would ever examine it for themselves.

But what in reference to the matter of summary removals from office in the Methodist E. Church? The language of "Mr. Hamline" is "Strict amenability in church officers, subordinate and superior, is provided for in our discipline. From the class-reader upward, this amenability regards not only major but minor morals—not only the *vices*, but also the

improprieties of behavior. The class-reader, by mere eccentricity, becomes unpopular in his class. The pastor at discretion removes him from his office. The exhorter or undordained local preacher proves unacceptable, and a Quarterly Conference refuses to renew his license. The itinerant pastor is not useful in his charge, and the bishop or the presiding elder deposes him from his charge or the pastoral office, and makes him an assistant. The presiding elder impairs his usefulness on a district, not by gross malfeasance, but by a slight *misfeasance*; or, oftener still, because 'he is not popular,' and the bishop removes him to a station or circuit, and perhaps makes him an assistant. I speak not now of annual appointments, when the term of the itinerant expires by limitation, but of removals by the bishop or the presiding elder in the intervals of Conference, which always imply a deposing from office, as well as a stationing act. In all these instances the manner of removing from office is peculiar. First. It is *summary*, without accusation, trial, or formal sentence. It is a ministerial, rather than a judicial act. Second. It is for no crime and generally for no misdemeanor, but from being 'unacceptable.' Third. Most of these removals from office are by a sole agent, namely, by a bishop or preacher, whose will is omnipotent in the premises. Fourth. The removing officer is not legally bound to assign any cause for deposing. If he do so, it is through courtesy, and not as of right. Fifth. The deposed officer has no appeal. If indiscreetly or unnecessarily removed, he must submit; for there is no tribunal authorized to cure the error, or to rectify the wrong. But we believe that there are good and sufficient reasons for granting this high power of removal to those who exercise it."

Let it be observed here that Mr. Hamline does not say that *all* suspensions, removals, or depositions from office in the Methodist E. Church are summary, but that "*in all these instances*"—the instances specified—it is the case. Neither does he say that they are all for no crime, &c. In many instances they are for crime or misdemeanor, and are the result of accusation, trial, and formal sentence.

Again, Mr. Ross evidently desires to make the impression that all the ecclesiastical rights and privileges of the ministers and members of the Methodist E. Church are liable to this authoritative and summary alienation. But this is not the

case. Mr. Hamline did not assert any such thing, as will appear by the following passage:—"My mind, sir, (if not my words,) has all along distinguished between orders and office. The summary removals which I have noticed are from *office* not from the *ministry*. In regard to ordained preachers, these two rules will hold. First, they cannot be expelled from the ministry summarily; but must have a trial in due form. Second, they cannot be expelled for improper conduct; but only for a crime clearly forbidden in the word of God. These rules, with few exceptions, will apply to private members, who may be removed from the leader's or steward's office at any time without due notice, trial, or cause assigned. But they cannot usually be expelled from the church without trial, or the offer of trial; nor for improper conduct, unless it become incorrigibly obstinate, and then it assumes the character of crime. The principles which apply to members and preachers, should govern us in regard to bishops. They ought not to be expelled from the ministry for 'improper' conduct, nor without due notice and trial. But if others, they too may be deposed from office summarily, and for improprieties which, if they be innocent, hinder their usefulness, or render their ministrations a calamity."

Thus we see that, according to the speech, these summary suspensions, removals, or depositions only place stewards and class-leaders upon a level with the membership generally, and presiding elders and bishops upon an equality with the great body of the ministry. It is also worthy of remark that all these offices to which this power is applied, with the exception of the pastoral office, are unknown to the Presbyterian Church. They have their origin in the peculiar structure of Methodism; so that if the offices themselves were summarily removed, Mr. Ross would have to lament over the removal of offices to which no Presbyterians are eligible. It is also worthy of remark, that these summary removals are the result of deference to the popular will. We apprehend that it would be no great affliction to Presbyterians, the laity, I mean, if, in some instances, their pastors could be removed by summary process. They are often compelled to endure their ministry for many long years after it has become stale and unprofitable, and are sometimes driven to the necessity of buying them off by a large sum, or of refusing to pay them their

salary, and, by other means, rendering their situation uncomfortable, so that they are compelled to ask a dismissal. Methodist preachers, with all their alleged despotism, have so much regard for the will of the people that, while they hold themselves ready to go to any part of the vineyard to labor, they are unwilling to force themselves or be forced upon any congregation, and therefore cheerfully consent to a liability to summary removal, by which the dissatisfied people may be relieved of their ministrations, and be served by those whose services are more acceptable.

But it may be that these sage defenders of civil and religious liberty find the evidence of absolute despotism in the *principle* of summary removal from office, irrespective of the offices to which it is applied, or the circumstances of its application. If so, their objection will be found to lie not only against Methodism, but also against the civil government under which they live.—What American schoolboy, over twelve years of age, does not know that the President of the United States exercises this power to a very great extent. Nor is he obliged legally to assign a reason for his removals. It is sufficient that the incumbent is unacceptable to him. This power is likewise exercised by inferior officers, such as governors of states, collectors of ports, mayors of cities, and county sheriffs, as well as by officers of the President's Cabinet. If the exercise of this power constitute a despotism, then this country is governed by a despotism. The general government is despotic. The state governments are despotic. The county governments are despotic. The city governments are despotic. Consider, too, that these summary removals involve pecuniary interests on a very large scale. The incumbent has relinquished his profession as a lawyer or a physician, or his business as a merchant or a manufacturer. Others have stepped in and occupy his place. He has been induced to place his whole reliance for support upon the proceeds of his office; when, in an unexpected hour, without any charge of delinquency, or intimation of any reason, he is informed that the office has been given to another, and he is obliged to resume his former business under very disadvantageous circumstances, or perhaps turn to another with which he is wholly unacquainted. I do not refer to this liability to complain against it, but for the purpose of contrast.—When the Bishop

removes a Presiding Elder from his office, he does not take away from him his support. He must find a place for him where he may discharge the duties of the ministry, and where he is entitled to his support, according to the economy of our Church. So if he remove a pastor from his office, he must assign him a place somewhere in the itinerant ministry, although it be a subordinate one. Consequently his claim for support is untouched. As to Class-leaders they are laymen. Their office does not require them to relinquish their secular business, in whole or in part; nor does it bring any emolument; so that their removal is a release from heavy duties and responsibility which yield no pecuniary profit. This whole business of summary removal in the M. E. Church is as though the superintendent of a manufacturing establishment, finding some of his hands unable to do the particular work assigned them to the satisfaction of the proprietor, should assign them other places in the establishment, the duties of which are commensurate with their ability.

When, therefore, Dr. Converse, adopting these articles, demands of us that we favor him with a definition and illustration of Russian, Turkish and Chinese despotism, or that we tell him where, in any army on earth, there is anything akin to this irresponsible power wielded in the Methodist E. Church, we refer him not to Russia or Turkey, or China, or to any army, but to the civil government of his own country; and we would suggest to him, that before he demands of us that we conform our ecclesiastical government in all respects to that of the American republic, or calls upon the civil rulers to compel us to this step,—he should arouse his own Church to the important and obligatory task of divesting the civil government of its despotic features, and conforming it to that of the Presbyterian Church, the great model for all governments civil and ecclesiastical.

But there is yet other proof against us, such as it is. Mr. Ross proposes the question:—"From whence does the Great Iron Wheel derive its power?" and quotes Mr. Hamline as saying:—"This General Conference is the sun in our orderly and beautiful system. Look into the Discipline. First you have our articles of religion in which God appears. What is next in order? The General Conference, which, like the orb of day, rises to shed light on the surrounding scene. It

is first shaped, or fashioned, and then like Adam by his Maker, is endowed with dominion, and made imperial in its relations, and saving the slight reservation of the Constitution, it is all-controlling in its influence." 'At this he exclaims:—"There it is! 'There you have the answer to the question from whence does the Great Iron Wheel derive its power? You see that the power thus professed by the General Conference, is claimed to be derived directly from God? Yes. There you have it. 'It' the General Conference 'is first shaped and fashioned, and then, like Adam, is endowed with dominion, and made imperial!' Yes, God has endowed the General Conference of the Methodist E. Church with dominion, and made it imperial. Not regal. No. Regal dominion was not despotic enough. But God has endowed the Conference with dominion, and made it imperial. The Cæsar, the Czar, the Emperor is the highest style of power unlimited and unchecked. God has made the General Conference imperial. So said Mr. Hamline and the General Conference."

Mr. Ross here pretends to have proved by the testimony of Bishop Hamline, that the General Conference professes to derive its power directly from God. But Bishop Hamline does not say any such thing. He says that "God appears" in our articles of religion. Of the General Conference he says, "It is first shaped or fashioned, and then, like Adam by his Maker, is endowed with dominion," meaning, evidently, nothing more than that, as Adam was first shaped or fashioned, and then endowed by his Maker with dominion, so the General Conference was first fashioned, and then endowed with dominion. But by whom this dominion was conferred, this quotation does not determine. The fact is, and it is one of record, that the General Conference derived its power directly from the Convention which originated it; and Bishop Hamline says nothing to the contrary. And, if it had made the claim which Mr. Ross ascribes to it, this fact would not authorize the inference that it is a despotism. All independent governments, according to St. Paul, and many excellent Presbyterian writers, derive their power directly from God. Whether the government be despotic, or liberal, depends upon the manner in which the power is exercised, not upon its immediate source. If, in the theory and structure of the

government, the people are regarded as the primary earthly depository of power—its immediate receptacle,—so that the official right to exercise it, goes out from them by delegation, the government may be republican or democratic. If, on the other hand, a single individual be regarded as its primary depository, so that, whatever official power is exercised by others, is traced up to that one person, the government is monarchical, and may be absolutely despotic. If I were to affirm that the American people derive their power directly from God, I apprehend I should not be thought politically heterodox by any who regard him as the original source of power. Yet, who will affirm that our government is a despotism?

But there is still, in the estimation of our opponents, fearful evidence against us. Bishop Hamline said that the General Conference is *imperial*. This word must now be relied upon to sustain the whole burden of proof; and, to make it available, Mr. Ross is obliged to assume that its only meaning is—pertaining to an emperor. Now, if this very learned writer had thought to refer to Webster's Dictionary, he would have found it thus defined:—1. "Pertaining to an empire, or to an emperor. 2. Royal; belonging to a monarch. 3. Pertaining to royalty; denoting sovereignty. 4. Commanding; *maintaining supremacy*."—Bishop Hamline meant, merely, that the General Conference is supreme in its relations to the other parts of the system. Suppose, that Dr. Converse were to apply this term, in this sense, to the supreme authority of the Presbyterian Church, whether residing in the General Assembly, or elsewhere, and I were to seize upon it as proof that the government of that Church is an absolute despotism, and exclaim:—"Yes.—There you have it. It is imperial. Not regal. No. Regal is not despotic enough. The Cæsar, the Czar, the Emperor is the highest style of power unlimited, unchecked," would I not thereby make myself ridiculous in the estimation of intelligent Presbyterians? I am sure I should be so regarded by intelligent Methodists. Equally ridiculous do Mr. Ross and Dr. Converse make themselves. That Bishop Hamline did not design to impute regal dominion to a deliberative body, comprising about two hundred men, acting in the character of representatives, is plain enough, unless we suppose him to be destitute of common

sense. And it is no less plain that he could not intend to represent them as an Emperor.

Upon such grounds do these men arraign another religious denomination, and pronounce its policy unworthy the toleration of freemen. I wonder how many "Judges and Lawyers" will be convinced, and enlisted against us, by such pompous and arrogant, but extremely silly ranting.

NO. III.

I do not intend that my last article shall be viewed in the light of a defence of Bishop Hamline. He needs no assistance from me: and I have no reason to think that he would stoop to defend himself against such reckless and vulgar assailants, or thank me, or any one else, for assuming to be his defender. My object is the refutation of Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse and Co. They do not intend that we shall "cast dust in their eyes" by pleading that the General Conference was divided on the resolution advocated by Mr. Hamline, and that the Methodist E. Church South do not sanction his views. I have no occasion here to take side with either of the parties of the late General Conference. The views of neither afford the least countenance to the assertions of Mr. Ross and his company; but those of Bishop Hamline are less favorable to their purpose than those of the other party. As to casting dust into their eyes, we would much rather anoint them with eye-salve that they might see.

Mr. Ross, after frequently affirming that the system of Methodism is, in essence, identical with that of the Jesuits at Rome, requests that a comparison may be instituted between the latter and the "imperial power claimed by the General Conference." To put his readers in possession of the requisite facilities for the comparison, he furnishes the following account of the system of the Jesuits, from the Edinburgh Encyclopædia:—"Loyola (the founder of the Jesuits), resolved that it should be absolutely monarchical. A general, chosen for life by deputies from the several provinces, possessed supreme and independent power, extending to every

person, and applying to every case. Every member of the order, the instant that he entered its pale, surrendered all freedom of thought and action; and every personal feeling was superseded by the interests of that body to which he had attached himself. He went wherever he was ordered; he performed whatever he was commanded; he suffered whatever he was enjoined; he became a mere passive instrument incapable of any resistance. The gradation of rank was only a gradation in slavery; and as perfect a despotism over a large body of men, dispersed over the face of the earth, was never realized."

According to this, the supreme power of Jesuitism is vested in a single individual, the general, who is selected for life, and made independent of all control or responsibility; every other member of the order surrendering all freedom of thought and action the moment he enters its pale. Now it is gravely asserted that this system is identical with one in which the supreme power is vested, by delegation, in a body of near two hundred men, who meet once in four years, hold a session of about four weeks, and then fall back to an equality with their constituents, each Conference composed of men elected a short time before its session, and for that one session only, many of whom are elected but once, and every one liable to be superseded at subsequent elections. Surely these editors must possess a remarkable acuteness in detecting resemblances. I have often wondered at the discernment of some grandmamas and others, who could perceive in any new born infant, at the first glance, a perfect likeness of the father or the mother, or both. But these matronly worthies would be compelled to retire into the shade should they ever encounter, in this department, the rivalry of Messrs. Ross, Converse and Company. However, the shrewdest sometimes make mistakes. I have heard a story not wholly irrelevant. It is said that in one instance after the birth of a child, a neighbor called to pay the customary civilities to the happy parents; and desirous of doing credit to her power of observation, and also of offering an acceptable compliment, she exclaimed on her way to the cradle, "O what a perfect likeness of its father!" But on removing the drapery, out jumped the family cat. I cannot help suspecting, if I may be allowed any judgment in the case, that these gentlemen have been equally

unfortunate in turning over the leaves of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, to find, in its account of Jesuitism, an exact pattern of that of the Methodists.

Mr. Wesley is next summoned to testify against us. A letter is quoted in which he says, "As long as I live, the people shall have no share in choosing either stewards or leaders among the Methodists. We have not, and never had such a custom. We are no republicans, and never intend to be." But this also fails to sustain the position of Mr. Ross. He has undertaken to prove that the Methodist government is an absolute despotism—the very system of the Jesuits—destructive of all freedom of thought and action. Is there no medium between being simply not republican, and being thus despotic? The English government is not republican, is it therefore an absolute despotism? But see how I will make this man refute himself. In a note appended to his article on class-meetings, he says:—"When Methodists are pressed with the declaration of Mr. Wesley, when speaking of his church—'We are no republicans, and never intend to be'—they accuse us of a want of candor, and tell us that Mr. Wesley was the subject of a king, and spoke the sentiments of an Englishman! Not so fast, good sirs. The government of England, although a monarchy, is nevertheless under the control of the people." It seems, then, that a government may be neither democratic, nor republican, but an hereditary monarchy, and yet be under the control of the people. The reader will be able to judge by this time, how much advantage Mr. Ross derives from Mr. Wesley's testimony.

While on the subject of republicanism, I beg leave to say that the Methodists have not sought to conform their economy to any form of civil government. They consider that form to be the best which answers most effectually the ends for which the Church of God was instituted, which differ materially from those sought to be accomplished by civil institutions. Whether our system is strictly republican, or not, it may be difficult to decide, as there seems to be no definite standard of republicanism by which to judge it. The modifications of republicanism are as numerous as there are, or have been, independent republics, and as there are states in the American Union. But I have no hesitation in saying

that it is not anti-republican. That it contains elements of republicanism, is undeniable. And there would be no difficulty in proving that it conforms as nearly to the civil government of our country as that of any other denomination.

But does not Methodism contain some provisions which, to say the least, have the appearance of being aristocratical? Well, what then? The Rev. Thomas Smyth, of Charleston, S. C., an eminent Presbyterian minister, in his work on "ecclesiastical republicanism," designed to prove that the Presbyterian polity is more republican than that of any other denomination, answers an objection to his system in the following manner:—"It is objected, that the clergy have a certain aristocratical influence in the church, resulting from their character, studies and relations. Grant that the ministry do constitute a check to the unreflecting passions and revolutionary spirit of the multitude, is there nothing analogous to this in our republic? The magistrates, judges, and all the other officers of government, our representatives, senators, and lawyers, who share in its stability and wealth, serve also as a kind of aristocracy, to break off the wild deluge of fierce and anarchical democracy in the state, and as the connecting link and bond between the two great classes of society, the governing, and those for whom they govern. And it is by the possession of these aristocratic elements, this elective and responsible nobility, not of wealth, but of office and dignity, that both the civil government of the land, and the ecclesiastical government of our church, are constituted **REPUBLICS**, and are distinguished from **PURE DEMOCRACIES**."

Here we find a Presbyterian minister apologizing for the alleged aristocracy of his system, by comparing it with the "aristocratical elements," and "elective and responsible nobility" of our civil government, and claiming that these elements are necessary to constitute a republic, as distinguished from a pure democracy. Why may not the benefit of this plea be extended to Methodism? But it is unnecessary for me to enlarge on this point at present. The question before us is not whether Methodism is a republic, or a democracy, but whether it is an absolute despotism.

To obviate the possible suggestion that Methodism "is better in the United States than Mr. Wesley intended it to be," Mr. Ross affirms and undertakes to prove that it "is

worse." "Mr. Wesley," he tells us, "was grieved when he heard that the Methodists in America, had established the Episcopacy." The proof of this he finds in a letter written by Mr. Wesley to Bishop Asbury, in which he says :—"How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called a Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool; a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never with my consent call me a *Bishop*."

That Mr. Wesley objected to the assumption of this *title* by the Methodist ministry, is undeniable; but this is no proof that he objected to the Episcopal form of government. We have his own words to the contrary. "As to my own judgment," says he, "I still believe the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical. I mean, well agreeing with the practices and writings of the apostles. But that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe." Our Episcopacy was instituted directly by Mr. Wesley himself. And had Mr. Ross that acquaintance with the history of Methodism necessary to justify him in attempting to write upon it, he would know that our Bishops possess far less power than was held and exercised by Mr. Wesley. But in answering his argument, it is sufficient to say that Mr. Wesley objected to our adoption of the title—*Bishop*—on account of the worldliness and lordly pomp and authority associated with it in European prelacy. And he had been led to suppose, by officious intermeddlers, that it had been assumed in America, in emulation of that pernicious display. Hence the severity with which he wrote to Bishop Asbury. Our General Superintendents are called Bishops, because the title supplies a much more convenient distinctive designation than the original one, and there is no good reason why it should not be so appropriated. That there is nothing particularly alarming in it, will appear from the fact that it is assumed by some Presbyterian and Baptist ministers. Among them is the Reverend Doctor Musgrave, of Baltimore, who has written a book against Methodism. But we despair of ever being able to please Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse, and the "fathers in the church" who urged the republication of Mr. Ross's articles, by anything short of joining the Presbyterian Church. They object to the submission of the Methodists to Mr. Wesley, and when we manifest independence enough to

establish an Episcopacy, as they suppose, and appropriate to our chief officers the title Bishop, contrary to Mr. Wesley's views, they are the more displeased.

Mr. Ross claims to be sustained in his abuse of Methodism by a passage quoted from the Princeton Review, which, he thinks, may be fairly regarded as exhibiting the mind of his Old School Presbyterian brethren. But this authority, like all the rest which he has adduced, is wide of the mark. The worst that it says of Methodism is, that "the society of Ignatius Loyola (i. e. the Jesuits), is the only one which surpasses it in its centralization of power." This is very different from asserting that Methodism and Jesuitism are the same. We are not careful to contest at present the opinion of the Princeton Review. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that it represents Jesuitism as surpassing Methodism in the very respect in which Mr. Ross affirms that they are identical.

It is interesting, if not amusing, to notice the facility with which Mr. Ross contradicts himself. He first describes the Episcopacy as the Great Outer Wheel, and undertakes to prove that its prerogatives are absolutely despotic. After a while, as his argument progresses, he ascribes this despotic power to the General Conference, as distinct from the Episcopacy. A little farther on the Episcopacy is again presented as the Great Iron Wheel, with its "imperial power, &c." How two distinct bodies, in the same system, can possess, at the same time, absolute authority over each other, is something which I cannot understand. Perhaps it is presumptuous in me, a Methodist preacher, a "hiccupping driveller," to impute self-contradiction to Mr. Ross. Let me then pay due respect to his education, and refinement, and intellectual greatness. Let me say—This Master Spirit first exhibits before us, as the embodiment of the supreme power of the Methodist E. Church, its Episcopacy, which consists of five or six Bishops. Suddenly, by the force of his amazing intellect, a transformation is effected, and we see this power wielded by the General Conference, consisting of near two hundred men. We look upon this scene for a while, and then, as by the touch of a magician's wand, the General Conference disappears, and we see enthroned in its place, an Emperor. We look again, and the Emperor with his throne and sceptre are gone, and the General Conference reappears. By another

effort of his mighty genius, he reproduces the Episcopacy, clothed with imperial power derived from God, and acting with omnipotent authority. Dr. Converse, and certain elders and fathers of the Presbyterian Church, look on with astonishment, and exclaim, with one voice, "Let the exhibition be repeated!" which being interpreted means, "Let the articles be republished." What marvellous transformations he will yet effect in order to make the system he opposes, vulnerable to his arguments, remains to be seen.

While I have supposed it possible that the articles of Mr. Ross may express the sentiments of Presbyterians *generally*, I am happy in knowing that they do not express the sentiments of Presbyterians *universally*. I have read, with great satisfaction, the remarks of "Medicus" in the last number of the Observer. He is a Presbyterian, and, of course, differs in opinion with us on many points; but he evidently desires to do us justice. There is no difficulty in loving a man of his spirit, although, in a denominational point of view, he may not be one of us. He is not afraid of Mr. Ross' denunciations, and is doubtless willing, for the sake of truth and charity, to be called "Mr. Timid Timeserver," or anything else. I thank God for the pleasant confidence I have that there are many more in his church of the same spirit. When I read the articles of Mr. Ross, I feel ready to take the sword, in defence of my rights as a Methodist, should it ever be necessary to do so. When I read the article of Medicus, I can hardly refrain from tears. Let such men smite us, and it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break our heads.

NO. IV.

I PROPOSE now to review what these redoubtable polemics have to say in opposition to Methodist class meetings. We are told that the class meeting, "including its inner wheels of band meetings and love-feasts, constitutes the link, the cog, the attachment, which whirls the membership of the whole Methodist Episcopal Church, fast or slow, in absolute

and perfect subserviency to the Methodist Ministry,"—that it is the "drill muster ground of Methodism, and is in principle and tendency, and actual results, the Roman Catholic Confessional."

The language of our Discipline respecting the design of class meetings, is—"That it may be the more easily discerned whether they are indeed working out their salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class; one of these is styled *the leader*. It is his duty: 1, to see each person in his class once a week at least; in order, 1, to inquire how their souls prosper; 2, to advise, reprove, comfort and exhort as occasion may require; 3, to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the preachers, church and poor." Again, "Let each leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers, not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God."

Is this the design of the Roman Catholic Confessional? Does the priest meet weekly twelve or more persons, in a class, for the purpose of inquiring into their personal spiritual prosperity—not only how each person conducts himself before the church and the world, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God, and to receive their voluntary contributions for the relief of the priests, the church, and the poor? Or does he appoint leaders to do this for him? If the much feared and censured Confessional is nothing more than this, verily there has been much Protestant clamor for very slight cause.

Mr. Ross kindly gives us some information respecting the Roman Catholic Confessional, as well as the Methodist class-meeting. He quotes Dr. Wiseman, a Roman Catholic priest, as saying, "Confession is a full, sincere, and humble declaration of our sins to a priest to obtain absolution."—"Every mortal sin must be confessed as distinctly as it can be remembered, together with the time, place, and circumstances in which it was committed." He also quotes in Latin some questions, which, he says, "must be asked at the Romish Confessional—questions so vile, that a man in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, who made translated extracts from them, as contained

in 'Dens' Theology,' was arrested (Nov. 1843) on the charge of having sold grossly immoral books."

Now, in the name of common sense, I ask what resemblance is there between this institution and the Methodist class meeting, as described by the Discipline? Upon what ground does Mr. Ross apply to the latter the term Confessional? *The Discipline, in relation to class meetings, says not a word about confession.* Confession is not the design of the class meeting, any more than it is of the prayer meeting, or any other occasion of social worship. There is just as much reason for calling the Presbyterian prayer meeting a Confessional. We do not deny that in these meetings there is frequently a general and humiliating acknowledgment of delinquency in regard to religious duties and attainments, but we deny that confession of sin in detail, is any part either of their design or practice. There are other topics than that of sinning which are supposed to occupy the attention of Christians when they meet for the express purpose of Christian communion. Methodists suppose it to be the privilege of Christians to have some religious enjoyment—to experience, not only trials of their fidelity, but also deliverances—to know something of the feelings which the Psalmist expressed when he said, "Come unto me all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." Perhaps Mr. Ross knows nothing of these feelings. He may regard them as fanatical. He may never have entertained much higher notions of religious experience than that it consists in sinning and repenting. If so, we need not wonder so much at his misconception of the nature of our class meetings. I am inclined to think that if he had attended one of them while engaged in writing his articles on Methodism, he would have found it very difficult to have made any other statement of his experience than a confession of sin.

And is it possible that Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse, and the "fathers and elders" who encouraged the republication of Mr. Ross' articles, are so "slacktwisted," (to adopt their own elegant phraseology,) as to believe that Methodist class leaders put to the several members of their classes, in each other's hearing, questions, the translation and sale of which led to the arrest of the vender, on the charge of having sold grossly immoral books? These men know very well, or

ought to know, and might very easily know, that most of our classes include the married and the single of both sexes promiscuously. They also know that it is not unusual for us to admit to those meetings persons who are not members of our church. Were the exercises such as they desire the public to think they are, they would not have been tolerated for any length of time. "The guardians of our civil and religious rights," to whom Mr. Ross now appeals, would have suppressed them long since, as dangerous to the morals of the community. I shall not complain, with Medicus, that these misrepresentations are "cruel." They indicate a degree of fatuity bordering upon idiocy itself. And as our religion does not allow us to regard their authors and endorsers with contempt, we tender them our pity.

In order to make out his point, that class meetings are for the purpose of confession, Mr. Ross confounds them with band meetings, or makes the latter a part of the "class meeting system." But these differ widely from each other. 1. Class meetings are authoritatively instituted by the church, and the observance of them is made obligatory upon all the members. This is not the case with band meetings. The formation of bands is optional with the members. No one is required to take part in them. 2. The class leaders are appointed by the pastors, and are recognized as officers in the church. They have a voice in the admission of members into the church, and are also, by virtue of their office, members of the quarterly-meeting conference. The bands have no leaders, except that one is desired by the rest to make a statement of his own experience, and then to interrogate his associates. This duty may be devolved upon each member in rotation. The account which the Discipline gives of band societies is as follows:—"Two, three, or four believers, who have confidence in each other, form a band. Only it is to be observed, that in one of these bands all must be men or all women; and all married, or all unmarried."

"The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.* James v. 16.

"To this end we agree: 1. To meet once a week at least. 2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason prevents. 3. To begin exactly at the

hour with singing or prayer. 4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed, in tempers, words, or actions, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting. 5. To end every meeting with prayer suited to the state of each person present. 6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sin, and temptations." Then follow the questions which may be asked on the admission of any one to the band, and those that may be asked at each meeting. See Discipline, page 83.

From this it is obvious that the law of the Discipline, respecting these meetings, does not originate them, or make them obligatory, but merely regulates them in case they exist. They are to be regarded as one of the arts of holy living which Methodists have adopted, with the approbation of the founder of Methodism, and under the supervision of the authorities of the church.

Having paved his way by thus connecting class meetings and band meetings, Mr. Ross proceeds to examine the workings of the class meeting system. He tells us, very significantly, that "the class leader may meet the members in private or in the class." If he mean by this, that the leader may separate the members of his class for the purpose of interrogating them privately, he is chargeable with a gross misrepresentation. Such a course would not only be unauthorized and unprecedented, but contrary to the design of class meetings, which is mutual edification by mutual communications on personal religious experience. If he mean that the leader may call upon his members at their homes, and converse with them, we make no objection. This, we suppose, is no more than any Presbyterian minister is authorized and expected to do in his pastoral visits. He refers for authority in this instance to Mr. Wesley's "Works," vol. v. p. 187. I have had the curiosity to turn to the volume and page indicated, and find not a single word relating to this matter.

We are further told that "he may ask them any question he pleases respecting their religious state." Whether this is designed to apply to private interviews merely, or to the exercises in the class meeting, I am not able to determine. It

is plainly designed to suggest that they may ask improper questions. I am not aware that Presbyterian ministers, or the ruling elders, are subjected to any restrictions in this matter. They may ask improper questions, if they are disposed to do so, and are prepared to risk the consequences. So may physicians put improper questions to their female patients. I doubt whether Mr. Ross is rendering much service to the cause of Christianity by thus directing suspicion to the religious intercourse of professing Christians. It will be a long time before he can convince the community at large that, while all other denominations are to be viewed with entire distrust, Presbyterians are entitled to unwavering confidence.

We are also informed that "the class leader may be one of any band meeting, of single men, or married men as the case may be, and being the class leader, he would naturally and obviously be the leader of the band, as the band is only a more secret class. In that band he must ask, and each member has bound himself, or herself, to answer such questions as these—1. What known sin have you committed since our last meeting? 2. What particular temptations have you met with? 3. How have you been delivered? 4. What have you said or done of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?" In view of this he exclaims 'Look there! These questions do cover the whole ground of the Romish Confessional. There is absolutely no question by possibility, which a Roman Catholic priest may ask, but may be asked by the band leader!! No, not one. The vilest questions to be found in Dens' Theology, and which the priest is required to ask, may be put to every member of a band meeting, and they have bound themselves to answer!!'"

The reader is requested to keep in mind that class meetings and band meetings have no such connection with each other as Mr. Ross affirms, and his argument requires. There are indeed very few band societies in existence in this country. I do not know of one. I do not state this fact because I deem them indefensible, but merely to show that they are wholly separate from the class-meeting institution. I shall vindicate them hereafter. The assertion that the class leader would naturally and obviously be the leader of the band, is not only without foundation but absurd. For if all the

classes were subdivided into bands, there would necessarily be a great many more bands than class leaders. Besides, class leaders, having peculiar responsibilities and trials, would be very likely to band together. But the worst feature of this passage is the art with which he insinuates that class leaders propose obscene questions to females. He begins by telling us that the leader "may be one of any band meeting of single or married men as the case may be," which is true enough, but he concludes by saying that "each member has bound himself or *herself*" to answer the questions. It would not do to suggest that there is any Jesuitism in this. O no! Presbyterian editors are incapable of it. Jesuitism is something very bad, and to be found only among Roman Catholics and Methodists.

He adds, "Once more. The very fact that the class meeting is subdivided into bands of all men or all women, and all married or all single, and the pledges to make a clean breast exacted of all who enter these more secret class meetings, is proof positive that the most searching confession was sought to be had from each member."

All this proceeds upon the assumption that class meetings and band meetings are the same—an assumption which I have shown to be false.

He proceeds, "Yet let it again be noticed. 'This class leader, empowered to receive the confession of so many members, as to their most secret thoughts, words, and actions, is also the person who is to ask these same members for their money, for the relief of the preachers, church and poor!'" By thus bringing the payment and receiving of money in juxtaposition with these confessions, he finishes the picture. But, unfortunately for his cause, there is no paying of money required in the band meetings, and no confessions are required in the class meetings. He very sagaciously observes: "How remarkable that confession in the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches should be connected with the payment of money." Very remarkable indeed! Cannot he favor us with a reference to the Discipline proving that the money is received in payment for hearing the confession and for absolution? He should not have omitted this, as some persons, not so acute and knowing as himself, may imagine that the payment of the money has no reference to confes-

sion, but occurs at that time because it is a convenient opportunity for collecting the voluntary contributions of the members for the support of the church.

NO. V.

IN my last number I showed that particular confession of sin is not the design of our class meetings, that band meetings, in which mutual confessions are expected, do not belong to the class meeting system, and from some cause are nearly obsolete in this country, and that, consequently, the band-society rules, upon which Mr. Ross relies to prove the class meetings are the same as the Romish Confessional, do not sustain his position.

Dr. Converse here comes to the help of Mr. Ross, not in reply to what I have said, but in reply to the editor of the "Christian Advocate and Journal." He is not willing to let us off so easily as we may desire. He has proof that confession of sin is the design and practice of our class meetings, notwithstanding our denials. He says, "A real case of confession to the class meeting—of the confession of a sin and injury which a man of honor, not to say a Christian, would blush to think of perpetrating, has been reported to us since this discussion commenced, by a gentleman of the neighborhood in which the party lived. Decency forbids us to state the particulars. The transgressor made a full confession of his crime to the class, and probably it relieved his conscience. But it placed another party in an awful predicament. The husband of a woman whose name came out in the confession, lost his reason, and after an unsuccessful attempt to commit suicide, died a poor deranged man. In this statement we are referring to facts reported from the class meeting, and the time and the place and the parties named, are all known to our informants."

Suppose this representation to be true, and I am free to confess that my faith in it would be none the weaker for a little confirmatory testimony, what does it amount to? Some

man, we are not informed whether a Methodist or not, or whether drunk or sober, made a confession of adultery in a class meeting, held at some place, we know not where, but the editor's informant could tell us all about it, if we only knew where to find him. And this is designed to prove that particular confession is the design of class meetings, and the common practice of our people in them. And, what is very remarkable, Dr. Converse tells us, at the same time, that he can believe the editors of the "Christian Advocate and Journal," both of whom are men of years, and familiar with the institutions and history of Methodism, when they tell us that they have never seen, or heard, or imagined such confessions in class meetings; thus acknowledging such cases as he brings to be extraordinary and irregular. It is very well that decency prevented him from stating the particulars of this affair, whether real or fictitious. He has certainly gone far enough to supply such imaginations as he had to deal with, with ample materials to work upon. A little more decency would have induced him to withhold the filthy communication altogether. It is clearly apparent that his object in part is to blacken the reputation of Methodism by adverting to the unhappy falls which sometimes disfigure its history, and which, unhappily for the cause of our common Christianity, are not less frequent within the pale of his own communion, notwithstanding their education and refinement and inferior numbers. A "weak brother," he evidently is, but he must have intelligence enough to know that twenty such stories would not answer the purpose for which this is adduced. I could adduce just as good evidence to prove that adultery is a common practice with Presbyterian ministers. Should he ever become a Methodist—a very improbable, yet not an impossible event—he ought by all means to be joined in a band with "brother Tommy Love-to-tell-it, and brother Christopher Can't-keep-it;" especially as the rules of band societies do not admit of his associating in this relation with "sister Sally Slanderwink and sister Susan Slacktwisted."

But the Doctor finds evidence accumulating upon him. He tells us in another number of his paper, that he was actually about to make some corrections, supposing himself mistaken, when another witness entered his office, fresh from the class meeting. "This witness," he tells us, "is a gentle-

man of about 30 years of age, of liberal education, serious, and of irreproachable character, and a member of an evangelical church. He had just been to a Methodist meeting. When he entered the meeting, he says that a man was addressing the class, and confessing his sins: In one corner of the house, a woman was standing near another man, and whispering a confession to him. (Here we questioned the witness, cross-examining him, and he said that,) he did not *know*, but *presumed* from her manner, that what she said to him, must have been of the nature of a confession.—In another part of the same house, a man who seemed to be a class leader, was exhorting a woman to be encouraged in respect to her husband—and hope and pray on for his conversion.

“These things were done, witness declares, at a certain place which he named, not fifty miles from our office. In the face of this testimony, we ask our friend of the ‘Advocate,’ if he has not known of such things in class meetings? And if the Discipline does not require the members of a band meeting to confess their sins to one another? And if some women, to his knowledge, do not confess, not only their own sins, but also the sins of their husbands?—If these things are not so—we will confess—that we have been misled by some of the best men living.”

The editor of the “Nashville Christian Advocate” hopes that the “Editor of the ‘Christian Repository’ will demand of the Observer the name of his *spy*, and of *him*, the time and place, &c., of the meeting, get the testimony of those present to the falsehood of the statement, and let the slanderer be appropriately branded before the world.” But it is unnecessary to make particular inquiry into the character of a witness when his testimony bears upon its face the marks of utter worthlessness. He testifies that when he entered the meeting, a man was addressing the class, and confessing his sins. In one corner of the house, a woman was standing near another man, and whispering a confession to him. Here the editor cross-examined him, and he replied that he did not *know* that the woman was confessing, but *presumed* from her manner that this was the case. This answer, although quite sufficient to destroy the credibility of the witness, was perfectly satisfactory to the editor. Had some Methodist been present, he would doubtless have been cap-

tious enough to have asked whether the man confessing made anything more than a general confession of failures and "short-comings," which we acknowledge to be frequently done in class meetings, or whether he confessed his sins in detail, and whether the witness heard or remembered any of the words uttered by the woman in her confession. But the reply of the witness that he did *not know*, but *presumed*, that the woman was confessing, was so conclusive to the mind of the editor, that he thought it unnecessary to go any farther. He is now prepared to call in question the declaration of his "friend of the Advocate," which his abundant charity had led him to credit prematurely, and to demand of him, in the face of this testimony, whether, "to his knowledge," such things do not occur as they have charged upon Methodism—in particular, whether some women, to his knowledge, do not confess, not only their own sins, but also the sins of their husbands. Are we to take this as a specimen of the kind of justice which will be dealt out to us when the bench of our civil courts is filled with Presbyterian "judges," and the bar with Presbyterian "lawyers"?

Let me not do this editor injustice. The character of the witness has something to do with his decision, as well as the nature of the testimony. This witness is one of irreproachable character, and of a liberal education, and, indeed, if the editor has been misled, he has been misled by some of the best men living. We are sorry for the claims of Christianity, if these are the best specimens of its practical workings.

To me, this story bears intrinsic evidence of falsehood. It represents that there were no less than three persons speaking, at the same time, in the same class meeting. When he entered the meeting, a man was in the act of confessing his sins, a woman was standing in a corner of the house (he considerably assigns her a very appropriate place), confessing hers to another man, and in another part of the house, a man, who seemed to be a class leader, was exhorting a woman, &c. Now this is wholly contrary to our custom, which is, for the leader to speak to each member of the class successively, and this is uniform and invariable. Such a class meeting as this evidence hunter had the good fortune to find, I never saw, and never heard of, until now, and my experience, com-

mencing in my boyhood, has extended over twenty-four years.

But Mr. Ross would be no better satisfied with class meetings, supposing the confession of sin to be omitted. He undertakes to prove that the class meeting system makes Pharisees of real Christians, and the following is his argument:—

“The class-meeting system tends to make a Pharisee of the Christian. For, when the truly religious Methodist reveals his experience every week, in which his progressive sanctification is disclosed to the class, his brethren, of course, must think well of him. And he must, notwithstanding his humility, think well of himself. Such a man will have little, peradventure, of sin, in his own opinion, to confess in the open class, if any in the more secret band. What next? Why, he becomes more and more confirmed in good opinions of himself, as he reaches a higher sanctification every week, while the brethren will be the more impressed by his humble look and honeyed relations of his triumphs over the flesh and Satan. What results from all this? Why, the man is made a Pharisee. For no man can tell every week in public class-meeting his supposed growth in grace, his joys and raptures, and see eyes swimming in exultation, and gazing upon him in fanatical or real religious sympathy—no man can pass through such secret, insidious, constant flattery without spiritual pride. The poor man could not help being a Pharisee, even if his whole religious training did not tend that way.—As it is, there is no help for him. Everybody sees it, even as he walks along the street. There is an air about him not to be mistaken, as far as you recognize him. He has enlarged his borders, and made broad his spiritual phylacteries, even if he has laid aside the standing collar and rounded front. You see it as he smiles upon you, and talks with you by the way. As he reveals what he thinks of you, and what he thinks of himself, his heart speaks out—‘God, I thank thee I am not as other men.’ No. ‘The class-meeting never did, and never can improve Christian character. It always has, and always will injure the piety of the good man. The laws of human nature, however improved by grace, decide the question. And facts, everywhere, in all the life of Methodism, sustain the opinion expressed as on a rock.”

This is a broad caricature. It is a premeditated burlesque on genuine religious experience, worthy of any infidel lecturer that ever entertained the baser sort by his Tammany Hall lucubrations. What is the purport of it when divested of its distortions? An acknowledged Christian meets with others like-minded, at stated times, for the purpose of relating to them his religious experience, and of hearing theirs in turn. He endeavors to grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God, and is conscious that the promised and imparted influences of the Holy Spirit, in connection with his prayer and faith and circumspect living, are actually increasing his spirituality. He declares this to others, giving God the glory, and his heart glows with grateful and joyous emotion while he speaks. His brethren have confidence in his declarations, for, so far as they can observe, his walk accords with them. They magnify the grace of God in him with emotions corresponding with those of the speaker. What, in the estimation of Mr. Ross, is the inevitable consequence of this? That God is honored by this open testimony to his goodness and truth, and the power and excellency of the Christian religion, and others incited to press ardently toward the same blissful attainments? No! The man is made a Pharisee. He must think well of himself, and the rest will give him to understand that they think well of him. Hence he cannot help being a Pharisee.

It would seem, then, that it is wholly unsafe for Christians to hold any intercommunion in relation to their own religious experience. They may talk on the politics of the day, or the events of the war. They may discuss the merits of the sermon, or of the preacher. They may argue questions of doctrine, and vilify other sects, but they must not relate to each the facts of their religious experience. They must not, like the Psalmist, tell what God has done for their souls. To confess to each other that they are sinners, would be highly dangerous. To speak of their religious enjoyments, would make them Pharisees. On this subject, therefore, they must maintain the silence of death.

This is not all. The principle upon which Mr. Ross works out his conclusion, cannot be restricted to one particular application. Suppose a member of the Presbyterian Church to be exemplary in his attendance upon all the means

of grace according to the arrangements of his own church, very diligent in improving his opportunities of usefulness, ready to contribute to the support of the church and the various benevolent institutions, a faithful Sabbath School teacher, a visitor of the sick, and of those who are in prison, a useful tract distributor, and withal remarkably scrupulous and circumspect in all his intercourse with the church and the world, yet cheerful in his temper, and urbane in his manners. Will he not be conscious of his motives and purposes? Will he be able to overlook wholly the difference between himself and many others in these respects? And will not his brethren observe his excellencies, and speak of them? Will none commend him either by words or actions? Will he not find out that he has secured the esteem and confidence of the church? How, then, can he help being a Pharisee? According to Mr. Ross's reasoning, he cannot. His is a gone case. And what shall we say of those ministers who have secured great popularity by their piety and talents, and eminent labors and usefulness? Such, for instance, as Whitfield and Davies, and Edwards and Tennent, and Payson and Summerfield? I will not offend my opponents by placing in the catalogue that arch-Pharisee, John Wesley. There can be no doubt that they were Pharisees,—every one of them—proud Pharisees. How could they help it? The applause which private members of the Methodist E. Church are greeted with, when they tell in class meeting "their supposed growth in grace," their "joys and raptures," and look around and "see eyes swimming in exultation, and gazing upon them in fanatical or real religious sympathy," is nothing to what was awarded to those men of God. Indeed, according to this principle of Mr. Ross, the better a man is the worse he is. The more eminent the Christian, the greater the Pharisee. The only way for a man to keep from being a Pharisee, is to be so vicious that it is impossible for him to think well of himself, or for any one else to think well of him. I think I can console Mr. Ross with the assurance that, until he brings forth works meet for repentance by ceasing to vilify others a thousand times better than himself, and to do the work of infidels, he will be in no danger of becoming a Pharisee from any extravagant commendations by the Methodists.

Class-meetings, it seems, tend also to make self-deceivers

and hypocrites. Says this writer :—"The results of the class-meeting are, if possible, still worse upon the seeker, and mere professor of religion. Both these grades are induced by the whole influence of Methodism, to make a false religious experience. To say nothing here of its mischievous teachings upon the subject of the evidences of regeneration, Methodism encourages its members to look for high excitement—enthusiastic joy—fanatical delusions. And now, when the truly good man tells his real experience, colored as it may be by his creed and his fancy, these seekers and mere professors will desire to give as good an experience too as they can—and from the very fact that they have no religion, they will, in the workings of the deceitful heart, be led to tell what is false, in self-deception—even if they do not make a mock character for the occasion. O! what facts would be disclosed, if we had the history of the class-meeting from the beginning! Alas! what will be the revelations of the Last Day!"

Thanks to Mr. Ross for the light which this passage throws upon a very important matter. Writers have endeavored to account for the early corruptions of the Christian church. They have assigned various causes, but they have doubtless overlooked the main cause. This oversight could not be otherwise than detrimental to the cause of reform. We have now the true explanation. One luminous suggestion reveals the whole. The Apostle Paul made a practice of relating his experience, and it was generally pretty well colored by his creed, if not by his fancy. He did this to the Ephesian Church when taking his leave of them. He did the same thing to the multitude at Jerusalem, and before Agrippa. He does it more or less in all his epistles. In his Epistle to the Philippians, he runs on in this strain :—"But what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ. That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable to his death. If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead," &c. This practice was quite

enough to effect all the mischief. Both seekers and mere professors would be led by it to make a false religious experience. They would desire to give as good an experience as he did. And from the very fact that they had no religion, they would, in the workings of the deceitful heart, be led to tell what is false, in self-deception—even if they did not make a mock character for the occasion. No wonder that deceivers waxed worse and worse. The Apostle had himself to blame for much of this. It is very plain that the class-meetings of the Methodists must contribute largely to revive and extend and prolong the evils of experience telling. And, what is deeply to be deplored, the example of the Apostle has been followed by many ministers and members of churches which have no class-meeting system. Presbyterian and Congregational ministers have recorded their experience in their diaries, or written it in letters to their friends, and these letters and diaries have been published for the perusal of the whole community. And sometimes there is, in their statements, an appearance, to say the least, of "high excitement, enthusiastic joy," &c. Take a passage from the life of Dr. Payson. Writing to his sister on one occasion, he says:—"Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere; pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants: I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion."—p. 462.

I have known this passage to be quoted by Methodist

preachers, in their sermons, and, although they distinctly notified their congregations that the author was of another denomination, the eyes of the Methodists would brighten up, and sparkle, and become suffused, and actually swim in exultation. The same effect, only still greater in degree, is produced by repeating the experience of St. Paul. Who could imagine the amount of evil which would inevitably grow out of a class-meeting including such men as St. Paul and Dr. Payson? Mr. Ross may congratulate himself and the church that they have been removed out of the way by death, but, unhappily for the reformation which he and Dr. Converse, and certain "fathers and elders" of the Presbyterian Church are engaged in, they being dead, yet speak. Their example continues to operate.

NO. VI.

MR. ROSS, as we have seen, objects to class-meetings on the ground that the practice of narrating religious experience tends to make Pharisees and hypocrites—Pharisees of good men, and hypocrites of seekers of religion and mere professors. It is altogether inconceivable to him that the piety of the devoted Christian should be strengthened by his frequently confessing Christ as his Saviour from sin and wretchedness, and that his joy and peace and spiritual strength should cause the seeker and the mere professor of religion to see and to feel painfully their destitution, and to aspire ardently after the same blissful attainments. Who cannot see that by adopting the method of reasoning pursued by Mr. Ross, we can easily prove that the Presbyterian Church, as well as our own, is made up of two classes, the one consisting of Pharisees, the other of hypocrites.

Having, in our defence of class-meetings, distinguished and separated them from band-meetings, the inquiry arises—Is there anything in the latter which will justify their being identified with the Romish Confessional?

Mr. Ross is fully answered upon this point by the passage

which he quotes from Mr. Wesley, who says, "An objection much more boldly and frequently urged, is that 'all these bands are mere Popery.' I hope I need not pass a harder sentence on those [most of them, at least] who affirm this, than that they talk of what they know not; they betray in themselves the most gross and shameful ignorance.—Do they not yet know, that the holy Popish confession is the confession made by a single person to a priest? And this itself is in no wise condemned by our church; nay, she recommends it in some cases,—Whereas, what we practice, is the confession of several persons, conjointly, not to a priest, but to each other. Consequently it has no analogy at all to Popish confession. But the truth is, this is a stale objection, which many people make against anything they do not like. It is all Popery out of hand."

This reply is pronounced by Mr. Ross to be "shuffling"—a "mere cavil"—"frivolous, fallacious and foolish." He takes occasion to say of Mr. Wesley that "he was one of the greatest cavillers that ever lived, and yet made the poorest out at dodging when hard pressed and cross-questioned." Had Mr. Wesley met with no opponent more formidable than this impudent and imbecile braggart, he would have had but little occasion for controversy. Let us now see how, in his own estimation, this doughty logician puts down Mr. Wesley—how he makes out an analogy between the confession of a single person to a single priest with the view of obtaining priestly absolution, and the mutual confession of several persons, for the purpose of mutual counsel, and with the view of praying with and for each other, without any expectation of pardon except from God as the result of deep repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

He begins, "Now let us keep fully before our minds what is the great delusion taught by Roman Catholics in this matter. It is this—the priest is enthroned as God." And after informing us that the great want of human nature is relief from the burden of sin, and that confession to God with true sorrow of heart will secure the desired relief, he adds:—"But the moment you substitute the throne of the priest, or any place of confession for the throne of God—then the soul has found relief from the burden of sin, not by confession

with sorrow of heart, but by confession without sorrow of heart." The reader must not suppose that we have yet discovered the point of analogy. These are mere preliminaries. It will not answer for him to see it, until he has been hoodwinked a little. After some rhapsodical flourishes about the unwillingness of the sinner to confess to God, and his readiness to confess to men, we are favored with a partial disclosure of the great principle which pervades and identifies the two systems. "Any confession (says he) of a wrong done to man, may be made, and the soul still feel sustained in its pride, by the remembrance that it has much of self-righteousness left." We have no comment to make upon this except that it is a stepping-stone—a medium of approximation to something beyond. He then tells us over again, with considerable variation both of phraseology and sense, what is the great delusion of Rome. "She gives the soul relief from the burden of sin by naked confession, and that *not to God* but to and through *some other being*." And now we come to the long-deferred speciality. Now we are to be told explicitly wherein consists the likeness of the Romanists, and the Methodist confessional. He says, "The very fact of telling sins against God to man, gradually obliterates the sense of guilt, extinguishes remorse, and leaves the soul prepared to draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope." Here is "the great principle involved in the confessional." *It is the simple fact of telling sins against God to men.* Methodist band meetings are identical with the Romish confessional, because at both there is confession of sin to men. "Whether (as Mr. Ross beautifully and classically expresses it), a man confesses to Priest Evermum, or there be a mutual confession between brother Tommy Love-to-tell-it, and brother Christopher Can't-keep-it, or between sister Sally Slanderwink, and sister Susan Slacktwisted," the error is the same. To say that Methodist band meetings are not analogous to the Popish confessional because the confession is not made by a single person to a priest for the purpose of obtaining pardon at the hand of the priest, but by several persons to each other, &c., is to trifle with the 'great principle involved.'"

That I have not misunderstood Mr. Ross, is plain from the remarks of Dr. Converse. He says, in an editorial, "In re-

spect to the subject which Mr. Ross has discussed, the more we examine it, the more deeply are we impressed with the belief that the *confession of sin to men*, whether it be to priests or a class of laymen, has, and must have, a deceptive and corrupting influence." The title of this editorial is "**CONFESSION TO MAN.**" We thus find both these Presbyterian Editors committed against the doctrine and practice of confessing sins to men. Dr. Converse adds, "Where the confessors regard this practice as a religious exercise—and it is so regarded in the regular class meeting—in nine cases out of ten, they may obtain relief to their consciences, when there has been no deep contrition, and no humbling confession, opening the heart to the scrutiny of the heart-searching God."

Let us now see how much is included in this astute proposition—*The confession of sin to men, whether it be to a priest or a class of laymen, has, and must have a deceptive and corrupting influence!*

A man is arraigned upon the charge of having committed murder. The evidence is fearfully conclusive to the minds of the jury, and he is found guilty. He is so in fact. But he continues to declare himself innocent. He is urged to confess his guilt by the ministers of law and the ministers of the Gospel. The former are desirous that the law should be magnified and made honorable, by his acknowledgment of the justice of its decisions and awards; and the latter entertain no hope of his obtaining forgiveness from God so long as he refuses to confess to the community his blood-guiltiness. At this point Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse and his patrons—fathers and elders of the Presbyterian Church—interpose, and warn him against making any confession to men, whatever may be the fact as to his innocence or guilt, assuring him that confession of sin anywhere else than to God will and must have a deceptive and corrupting influence upon him.

But perhaps the innocent man is about to be executed. There has been brought against him a formidable array of circumstantial evidence. The murderer is in the crowd. He is stung with remorse. He feels for a moment as though death, with an unburdened conscience, would be preferable to the mental agony which he endures. He is about to proclaim himself the guilty man when the monitory teachings of Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse, and aged and respectable fathers

and elders of the Presbyterian Church, recur to his mind. He feels that he is not only excused from executing the promptings of his troubled conscience, but solemnly warned against the course. He may obtain temporary relief by confession to men, but he will only increase the 'difficulties in the way of the salvation of his soul. He has been instructed that the very fact of telling sins against God to men obliterates the sense of guilt, extinguishes remorse, and leaves the soul to draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin, as it were, with a cart rope,—that it *must* have a deceptive and corrupting influence.

A member of the church is charged with a disgraceful crime. The evidence against him is strong, and excommunication is inevitable. He denies the charge, appeals to the sympathy of his friends, and secures the support of a party in the church. The church is distracted by contention respecting his case. A confession of guilt would remove all this difficulty. He feels, sometimes, as though it would be a relief to his oppressed conscience to make that confession. But he has read the articles and editorials of Mr. Ross and Dr. Converse against Methodism. He has no doubt that the band-meetings of the Methodists are identical with the Romish confessional, because their exercises include confession of sin to men, and that such confession is dreadfully corrupting. And as he has no desire to make himself any worse than he is, he of course withholds the confession which would have vindicated the church and terminated its distractions.

Or perhaps the innocent brother—the devoted Christian—has been selected as a victim by the real perpetrator of the crime, and is condemned by the testimony of perjured witnesses. Confession of sin to men would place him in his true position, but it may not be made. Let the guilty confess their sin to God and they may obtain forgiveness, but let them not enhance their guilt and fortify their depravity by confession to men. If they are Presbyterians, let them, by all means, eschew confession of sin to men, and so keep Popery out of the Presbyterian Church.

The father—the head of a family—finds that some depositions have been committed within his premises. The circumstances assure him that the mischief has been done by

some one of his children or his servants. All stoutly deny having done the deed. He is deeply perplexed. If he knew the aggressor to be one of his servants, he would be obliged to dismiss him. If one of his children, it would be necessary to administer proper discipline. He urges a confession. But, he is a subscriber for the Christian Observer. They have read that paper, and, consequently, are fully prepared to estimate the moral character of the act to which he prompts them. *They* make confession to men! They know better. For, besides subjecting themselves to some inconvenience, it would be wicked. It would be rank Popery.

A member of the church, having long enjoyed the confidence of his pastor and brethren, is changed in his conduct. He appears dejected, and excuses himself from exercising in public. His case enlists all their sympathies. They imagine that he is in heaviness through manifold temptation; and pray for his deliverance. Whereas, he has been living in some secret but scandalous sin. If he were to confess it to them, instead of wasting their tears of sympathy over him, they would administer suitable rebuke. But he may not make the confession. It would be wrong. He must let them weep and pray for him as an afflicted brother, until the concealment of his guilt is no longer possible, and then they may stand aghast at his hypocrisy.

Such are the profound and sublimated ethics taught by these Presbyterian editors, &c. Wonderful conservators and promoters of public morals are these men! They need not be astonished if the ignorant Methodists cannot appreciate their erudite teachings, but require something better adapted to the understandings of "grown children." *What is this but inculcating hypocrisy*—enjoining it as a Christian duty—not in terms, but in fact? And yet these men affect to be alarmed at the occasional temptations to hypocrisy connected with a system which requires of its adherents an open and candid avowal of their spiritual condition.

I am happy to be able to say that the abominable doctrine, promulgated by these editors and fathers, is without the sanction of their Confession of Faith. We there read the following:—"As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof; upon which and the forsaking of them he shall find mercy;

so he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him!" p. 68. According to this there is no incompatibility between confession of sin to men and a truly penitent confession to God. Have these men, in their zeal to overthrow Methodism, overlooked this? Perhaps they have no notion of being tied down to so antiquated a tenet. They may think themselves called upon to substitute for it some new and more enlightened divinity. One thing, however, is clear—if confession of sin to men is Popery, there is Popery in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

Mr. Wesley is charged with a detestable perversion of James v. 16, for the purpose of vindicating his class-meeting system. But in order to sustain the charge of perversion, it is found necessary to misrepresent the object for which this passage is adduced. Mr. Wesley quotes it in connection with band-meetings, merely to prove the duty of mutual confession, &c. The formation of bands he regards as a prudential arrangement, not contrary to Scripture, yet not expressly enjoined. There is no rule in Scripture, prescribing the particular manner of performing the duty. This is left to the discretion of the church. His interpretation of the passage is fully sustained by Calvinistic commentators, Dr. Scott, in particular, who makes the following remarks upon it: "The apostles next exhorted Christians to confess their faults one to another; this may mean either mutual acknowledgment of the faults into which they had fallen in their conduct towards one another, which would tend greatly to peace and brotherly love, or a communication reciprocally of their experience, and a confession of those things which burdened their consciences, which, when prudently managed, would make way for them to counsel, encourage and exhort one another, and be a direction to their prayers for each other, and thus tend to their inward peace, and healing of their souls. But this does not at all resemble the practice which Rome has absurdly grounded upon it, of the laity being required to confess all their secret sins to the priest, in order to their being pardoned and absolved." Will Mr. Ross charge Dr. Scott with "shuffling" and "cavilling," and

"trifling with the great principle involved in the confessional," because he affirms that the reciprocal confession of sins by Christians, *bears no resemblance* to the Romish practice of the laity being required to confess all their secret sins to the priest, in order to obtain from him pardon and absolution?

Mr. Ross professes to give us the true meaning of this passage. He says that it is happily expressed by Doddridge, whom he quotes as saying:—"When you are conscious of having been really to blame, do not previously vindicate a conduct which your hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. Confess your faults one to another," &c. But he is not satisfied with this interpretation by Doddridge, notwithstanding he commends it so highly. He undertakes to improve it by adding—"Here is the simple requirement, to confess our faults one to another—under the dictate of conscience, in private to the individual, and when, and where, in our view suitable." This is as great a "curiosity in the way of exegesis" as the Roman Catholic comment. It is obvious to any person of good sense that the Apostle simply enjoins confession, without determining anything in respect to the manner or circumstances. The Roman Catholic has just as much authority for construing it to mean, "Confess your sins one to another, that is to the priests of the church," as Mr. Ross has for his construction, which prescribes that the confession shall be "in private, to the individual, and when and where in our view suitable." Mr. Wesley's comment, in his notes on the New Testament, agrees well with those of Scott and Doddridge. "*Confess your faults—whether ye are sick or in health, to one another.* He does not say to the elders: (this may or may not be done; for it is nowhere commanded.) We may confess them to any one who can pray in faith. He will then know how to pray for us, and be more stirred up so to do."

But Mr. Ross has rendered some service to the cause of truth by this strange comment. He has given the authority of the Apostle in favor of *confession to men*, and has thus condemned his own foolish and demoralizing conceit on this subject. What will Dr. Converse say to this?

The reader will remember that Mr. Wesley, in his reply to the objection under review, made use of the expression,

"Do they not yet know that the only Popish confession is the confession made by a single person to a priest? And this itself is in no wise condemned by our church; nay, she recommends it in some cases." Mr. Ross undertakes to torture this into a concession in favor of the Romish Confessional. He says, "Mr. Wesley here tells all who objected to his system, that while it was *not* Popish confession, yet, *if it had been*, it would have been in no wise condemned, nay, recommended in some cases by his church? Truly, Mr. Wesley, your denial that your class-meeting system is Popery, is nothing; but your confession, that if it had been Popery, it would have been in no wise condemned, nay, recommended in some cases by your church, is everything. It shows that you were a true churchman, and in this particular, willing, if needs, to be a Roman Catholic." But this, like every other attempt of this stupid bigot to deliver his brains of an argument, is a miserable abortion. Mr. Wesley does not profess or design to describe the entire system of the Romish Confessional, but merely to point out one single feature of it, which is sufficient to illustrate the difference between that system and band-meetings. Nor does he select the worst feature, or one exceptionable in itself. He takes the single fact of its requiring confession by a single person to a priest. And it is quite relevant to his purpose, to note that the Church, by which he means the Church of England, not the Methodist Church, in no wise condemns this practice, but in some instances recommends it. The force of this allusion is here—he was writing to a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Mr. Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, in Kent. The objection he was answering had been urged by Churchmen. But if the Church recommended, in some instances, a practice so much nearer to Popery, there surely could be no propriety in Churchmen urging this objection to band-meetings. He does not say whether he approves of occasional confession to a priest or not. And if he had been speaking of Methodism, instead of the Establishment, there would have been no occasion for the remark, that, "in this particular, he was willing, if needs, to be a Roman Catholic." Where does the Confession of Faith condemn the confession of a single person to a minister? If a Presbyterian minister should visit a murderer in his cell,

would it be a violation of any law of his church for him to hear the confession of the murderer, or even to urge him to confession? I grant that it would be at variance with the newest new schoolism of Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse, and certain fathers and elders of the Presbyterian Church, but that is another thing. And even Mr. Ross is obliged to give his sanction to this practice, when he becomes the interpreter of St. James. He understands the apostle to require a confession in *private* to the *individual*. I presume he will not say that ministers are absolutely disqualified, by their office, to hear confessions, even when they are the injured persons. But he must either take this ground, or admit that confession may, in some cases, be made in private to a minister. It turns out, therefore, that he is just as willing to be a Roman Catholic, in this respect, as Mr. Wesley. Indeed, he approaches nearer to Romanism, for he would restrict confession to this privacy, whereas, Mr. Wesley allows it between several persons. The grand distinction of Popish confession is that it is made to the priest as the representative of God, empowered to pardon authoritatively the individual confessing, and with the view of obtaining absolution from the priest.

NO. VII.

ACCORDING to Mr. Ross and Dr. Converse, the great delusion of Romanism and Methodism, in respect to confession, is, they require confession of sin to men. It seems, also, that in connection with this there are two little delusions, absolution and penance, both of which are imputed to Methodism. Says Mr. Ross:—"But it may be asked just here whether absolution from sin is granted at the Methodist confessional? We answer—Yes. Just as really as at the Roman confessional." He then defines the absolution granted at the latter to be "the fact distinctly taught, that the penitent there may find relief from the burden of sin, by laying it on

the bosom of the church, there representing Christ in the person of the priest." But with all his hardihood, he is not prepared to impute this to Methodism, and hence he immediately varies his statement. "The real absolution," he says, "is granted by the fact, that the church in the name of Christ requires us to confess our sins to its ministers or members." He is now ready to define Methodist absolution, which he does as follows:—"The absolution granted by the Methodist confessional, is the fact distinctly taught, that Jesus Christ requires us to confess our faults one to another, and that this confession is truly made in the class meeting." Is this all? And do not St. James and Doctors Doddridge and Scott, Calvinistic commentators, teach that we are to confess our faults one to another? Has not Mr. Ross himself taught the very same thing in his comment upon St. James? Does not the Confession of Faith teach the same? For the sake of convicting Methodism of Popery he is willing to convict St. James, Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Scott, himself, and in fact, the whole Presbyterian church, of Popery. Do all these teach the doctrine of absolution? Is it not utterly astonishing that an authorized minister of the Gospel can have the face to bring so groundless a charge as this against a large Protestant denomination? He cannot find a single instance in all the history of Methodism, in which the doctrine of absolution by the ministry has been taught or practised, and he is obliged to rest his charge upon the simple fact, that we hold it to be the duty of Christians to confess their faults one to another. Had he discovered, in his eager and hasty exploration of our standard works, such a passage as occurs in the Confession of Faith of his own church, he would have announced it with a volley of exclamations such as—"here it is! Yes, here it is! Look at it!" &c. On page 129 we find these words: "The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occa-

sion shall require." Here is the doctrine of absolution distinctly taught, not only in effect but in terms.

The reader, somewhat startled, may be ready to ask—Does the Presbyterian church hold to Popish absolution? I answer—No! Certainly she does not! I would not, on any account, be understood to intimate that she does. But the reader can see that if I were disposed to answer Mr. Ross by retorting the charge, I could make out a much stronger case against his church than he can against mine. The most charitable supposition in respect to him is, that he is equally ignorant of Romanism and Methodism, and pitifully ignorant of both. The Roman Catholic doctrine is thus stated by the Council of Trent: "The power of forgiving and retaining sins, in order to reconcile the faithful who have sinned after baptism, was communicated to the apostles and their lawful successors. Wherefore this holy synod, approving and receiving the above most evident sense of these words of our Lord, condemns the vain interpretations of those persons who falsely restrict them to the power of preaching the word of God and publishing the Gospel in opposition to the institutions of this sacrament." And in the Catechism of this Council, we are taught that "Our sins are forgiven by the absolution of the priest. The voice of the priest, who is legitimately constituted a minister for the remission of sins, is to be heard as that of Christ himself, who said to the lame man, 'Son be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.'" Those who "affirm that the priest's sacramental absolution is not a judicial act, but only a ministry to pronounce and declare that the sins of the party confessing are forgiven," are pronounced "accursed." See Elliot on "Romanism," vol. i. pp. 305, 306.

Mr. Ross refers to formal absolution by the priest as a very unimportant circumstance, giving a sort of finish to the delusion, but not of the essence of absolution. This consists in teaching that it is the duty of Christians to confess their faults one to another. But I need say no more upon this point.

Equally futile and ridiculous is his attempt to fasten upon us the charge of holding to penance. I would pass it on without notice were it not that he connects with it a personal reference to Mr. Wesley. He represents that honored divine as conceding that his system leads to penance as a result.

He finds this pretended concession in these words, "By applying both the threats and promises of God to these real, not nominal penitents, and crying to God in their behalf, we endeavored to bring them back to the great shepherd and bishop of their souls; not by any fopperies of the Roman Church, although in some measure countenanced by antiquity. In prescribing hair shirts, and bodily austerities, we durst not follow even the ancient church, although we had unawares, both in dividing the *οἱ πιστοὶ*, the believers from the rest of the society, and in separating the penitents from them, and appointing a peculiar service for them." From this he infers that if Mr. Wesley had dared, he would have had all the fopperies of Rome, including hair shirts and bodily austerities; and he predicts that they must "all come in time, if the Methodist church shall dare to carry out the class-meeting system to its proper and perfect results." Now any man of common sense can perceive, without a second thought, that Mr. Wesley meant nothing more nor less than that he durst not vary from the holy Scriptures, although, in so doing, he would be conforming to the most ancient and venerable ecclesiastical authority. This looks very much like Popery. To lay aside irony, I ask, is it not the very essence of Protestantism? But Mr. Ross has undertaken to put down Methodism, and if the end do not sanctify the means, they must go unsanctified. As to Mr. Wesley being restrained by the fear of men from carrying out his convictions of truth and duty, his whole history refutes the mendacious imputation. And we now say to Mr. Ross, distinctly and emphatically, that the Methodists of the present day dare to, and *will* sustain their institutions, carrying them out, as far as they can, to their proper and perfect results, in despite of him, and all whom he can league with him, in his unhallowed and persecuting opposition.

I shall not condescend to answer particularly the charge that confession of sin, as taught by the Methodists, hardens the conscience; and that this tendency is actually exemplified in the moral character of "the Methodist common mass." Nor is it necessary to enter upon a very elaborate refutation of the charge that it leads to an abject submission to priestly control. The absurdity of this is sufficiently indicated by the fact that our people are at liberty to exercise their own dis-

cretion as to whom they shall confess their faults, or when. They are not obliged to form bands. And if they desire to so organize themselves, they can choose their associates. Indeed, they are at liberty to select for their most intimate confidants, members of other churches, Presbyterians, or Baptists, or Protestant Episcopalians. I have shown that they are not required to confess to their leaders in class meeting. And if they were, *the whole power of the confessional would be in the hands of laymen.*

To this Mr. Ross would probably reply that the leader is the mere tool of the preacher, being dependent upon him for his appointment, and liable to be removed by him at his pleasure. But these circumstances are not sufficient cause to create such abject subserviency. Will he contend that all the officers of the general government who are dependent upon the President for their appointment to office, and liable to be removed by him at his discretion, are therefore the mere tools of the President? And yet they are far more likely to be in this condition of vassalage than are Methodist class-leaders; because their offices entitle them to large salaries; while the office of class-leader is without emolument. Moreover, the class-leaders hold in their hands, to a great extent, the support of the preacher. In the first place, they constitute a majority of the quarterly conference, which determines the amount to be allowed him for table expenses. Secondly, they receive from the classes what they are willing to give for his support. His entire living must pass through their hands. Upon them it depends, to a very material extent, whether the members give or withhold: so that all the power of pecuniary patronage is with them. Nor has he any means of enforcing his support. There is nothing of the nature of a legal contract binding the church to give him anything. Nothing, therefore, could be more impolitic than for the preacher to thwart unnecessarily the judgment and wishes of his class-leaders. If, in the mere wantonness of power, he displace one or more of them, the sympathies of the rest will be against him, and his condition will be decidedly unenviable. He will have alienated from him those whose zealous co-operation is indispensable to his success, spiritual or temporal. The Canaanitish king was not more helpless, after the excision of his thumbs and great toes, than is the

Methodist pastor without the concurrence and support of his class-leaders.

Mr. Ross gives as evidence of the servility of our people that "they submit to have their immense itineracy quartered upon them." We commend him for the moderation with which he complains in this instance. This is but a small part of the grievance. The Methodists not only submit to all this, but greatly desire it, regarding this mode of distributing ministerial labor and oversight, as preferable to any other, and esteeming their ministers very highly in love for their work's sake. It is doubtless very much to their discredit that they do not reject the Methodist ministry altogether, and support that of the Presbyterian church; but we must endeavor to bear patiently the ills which we cannot cure. I have no doubt that Mr. Ross has to endure much personal inconvenience and annoyance from the perverseness of the public in general, and the Methodists in particular, in respect to this very matter. But let him cheer up. He may yet see a brighter day, when the civil magistracy be aroused to the discharge of their duty, and shall carry out the very republican principle of putting down, by force of law, whatever doctrines and practices are condemned by himself, Dr. Converse, and certain "fathers and elders" of the Presbyterian Church.

NO. VIII.

THERE remain to be reviewed two more of Mr. Ross's pretended arguments to prove that confession of sin, as provided for in the rules of the band-societies, is demoralizing. The first is in these words:—"Let people talk about sin habitually, especially secret thoughts and emotions, as a prescribed round of duty, whether at the Roman Catholic confessional, or in the Methodist class or band-meeting, or in a—New York Moral Reform Association, or anywhere else, and you break down the natural barriers God has erected in the instinctive

shame of human nature, to say nothing of quenching the Spirit." I grant that talking about sin as ungodly men are supposed to talk about it—as a mere entertainment—without any abhorrence of it—or perhaps taking pleasure in those by whom it was committed, if not boasting of their own proficiency in crime—is of a very pernicious tendency; but this is very different from a mutual and penitent confession of sin with the object of assisting each other to obtain a triumph over it. There is as great a difference between these two ways of conversing about sin as there is between quoting Scripture in mere jest, and quoting it for grave and suitable purposes; or between taking the name of God in vain, and pronouncing it reverently in worship. But confessing from religious motives, or as a "prescribed round of duty," only makes a bad matter worse in the view of this sagacious moralist. Did it never occur to his very penetrating and discriminating mind that *thinking* of sin habitually, especially as a prescribed round of duty, must be very corrupting, and that, consequently, confession of sin to God must be a very dangerous practice? He thinks that "Satan himself never, even in Romanism, invented a system more certain to produce a lax morality." Poor simpleton! He is marvelously ignorant of Satan's devices, if this is the worst he has any knowledge of. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Satan, the god of this world, has blinded his eyes so as to make him a more ready and effective agent in opposing Methodism. Indeed, committing sin every day is, with him, a comparatively trifling matter. With this the best of Christians are chargeable according to his creed. But for two, or three, or four of such, having full confidence in each other, to meet once a week, to confess their sins to each other, to counsel each other, and to pray together for pardon, and for grace to overcome temptation in future, is an awful affair—a wickedness to be punished by the judges. They had far better be at the ball-room, or the horse-race, or the card-table, or the theatre, or engaged in practising any other of Satan's devices. So decides this Mr. Ross. He endeavors to enlist against us whatever prejudice may exist against the New York Moral Reform Association. It is not necessary for me to say anything for or against this institution. The cases are not analogous. Its friends meet not to confess their own sins,

but to consider the sins of others, with the view of reforming them.

We must now gird up the loins of our minds for a contest with another of his arguments. This is drawn from the questions to be asked at the band-meeting. They are these:—"1. What known sin have you committed since our last meeting? 2. What particular temptations have you met with? 3. How have you been delivered? 4. What have you thought, said or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?" Differing from Mr. Ross, we think that the serious proposal and answering of these questions must tend to a salutary habit of self-inspection; to a self-knowledge that could not be easily acquired in any other way; to more than ordinary skill in detecting the wiles of the great enemy; to a thorough acquaintance with the morals of Christianity; and also to timely encouragement and aid under subtle and severe temptations. He seems to think that they must, as a matter of course, lead to obscene disclosures. We see no necessity for this. The persons asking and answering them are not supposed to be debauchees and prostitutes. And if they were, I should like to know how they would be so much more corrupted by confessing their sins, than by committing them? Such persons are not likely to form associations for such purposes. They will doubtless talk about their sins; but with all his professed familiarity with Satan and his devices, he never heard of such a thing as persons of this class meeting statedly to confess their sins and temptations to each other, and to pray with and for each other that God would forgive them, and endow them with grace to break off from sin, and shun the appearance of evil. Should he push his inquiries in this direction, he will be much more likely to find them fortifying themselves in crime by interchanging such sentiments as these:—God ordained every man's character and conduct, with whatever comes to pass in the world, before he made the world itself, as the preacher said, so that we are just what he made us and wills us to be. If he had not foreordained and brought to pass, the actions which we have performed, we could not have performed them, as we should have been compelled to perform those which he did foreordain. The fact that we have performed them is the proof that they were foreordained. And if we did it freely and willingly as

the preacher insists, so much the better. We have not only done just what God willed we should, long before we had any wills of our own, but we have done it without any rebellion or constraint. And if he has foreordained that we shall do otherwise in future, we shall do so as a matter of course.—Indeed, if they could be induced to form bands, and be governed in their meetings by the rules of the Methodist discipline, their confessions would soon lead to true penitence and to reformation. But these meetings were not designed for such, but for the members of the church—for spiritually minded men and women seeking higher attainments in spirituality. All the questions relate intimately to the spiritual welfare of the parties. That matters of some delicacy should occasionally come up would not be wonderful. The consciences of the Corinthian Christians were exercised about such matters, and they not only talked them over, but also consulted the apostle Paul respecting them. Nor did he rebuke them. He solved their scruples, and in doing so, said a number of things which could not, without obvious impropriety, be made the subject of pulpit discourse. Should there be any interchange of sentiment respecting his meaning, it must be in very select companies—band meetings in reality, if not in name. And yet no Christian charges the apostle, or the Corinthians, with impropriety, much less with obscenity. This consists not in the simple fact of making such things the subject of discourse, but in the manner and occasion of so doing. It is presumed that Mr. Ross would not charge all physicians with obscenity, and yet, poor human nature is allowed to have no secrets into which they do not pry, and which they do not make the subject of conversation and even of lectures. And it is a mistake to suppose that the temptations of Christians are mainly temptations to violate the law of chastity, or that their sins are mainly violations of that law. Is Mr. Ross willing to have it understood that the most eminent members of the Presbyterian Church could not meet for the purposes contemplated by Methodist band meetings, without weekly confessions of fornication or adultery, or at least of temptations to such sins?

But this is Mr. Ross's great argument. He lays much stress upon it. "There is," says he, "absolutely, no question by possibility, which a Roman Catholic priest may ask, but may

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be asked by the band leader!! No, not one. The vilest questions to be found in Dens' Theology, and which the priest is required to ask, may be put to every member of a band meeting, and they have bound themselves to answer." If he mean by this, that the putting of such questions is *authorized*, his assertion is wholly gratuitous; and to say that because one set of questions may or must be asked, another and very different set is authorized, is certainly not very conclusive reasoning. If he mean that it is *merely possible* that such questions may be asked, we admit the proposition. To deny that it is possible for professors of religion to do very foolish and wicked things, would be to contradict the evidence furnished by Mr. Ross's own conduct. And we strongly suspect that the foul misconduct of Presbyterian ministers, in some instances, which has compelled their brethren to sit in ashes and weep, has been preceded and accompanied by questions not much better than the vilest in Den's Theology, and also, that their understood and unquestioned right to interrogate their church members respecting their religious state, and that in private, has been abused to the destruction of confiding innocence.

Mr. Ross' argument is not yet exhausted. He claims that these questions cover the whole ground of the Romish Confessional. If he mean by this that they are so general, that all the particular interrogatories of the Romish confessional may be classed under them, I reply—This may be no just ground of objection. It may be very proper to ask general questions when it would be very indecorous to question minutely. Every person endowed with common sense practically recognizes this maxim. It is a universally allowed practice to inquire of persons respecting their health; and yet to require, by minute interrogations and cross questioning, a particular account of all the bodily ailments of our friends and acquaintances would be deemed an outrage upon the proprieties of social intercourse. I give this merely to show that the right to ask general questions does not imply the right to ask whatever particular questions they may be supposed to comprehend.

To make this argument as effective as possible, he "boldly throws open," as Dr. Converse expresses it, "the doors" of the band-meeting. "Just think," says he, "that these ques-

tions (the vilest questions in Den's Theology), may be asked by married men and married women, and young men and young women, of one another in the band-meetings." The obvious design of this infamous passage is to make the impression that indecent questions are authorized by the rules of band-meetings, to be proposed and answered in companies comprising both sexes, married and single. But this is not the whole of the entertainment which he provides, and over which Dr. Converse and his patrons—fathers and elders—smack their lips with such rare gusto. He proceeds, "Just think of sister Sally Slanderwink leaning from that band-meeting bench, where confessions are to be made, and whispering to sister Susan Slacktwisted as follows." Then come several questions and answers in Latin. The understanding is that they are too indecent to admit of being translated for the press. It would not answer so well to employ men as his actors in this scene. The entertainment would not be so rich. It greatly increases the effect of the illustration to put the hawdy dialogue into the mouth of females. I hesitate not to pronounce this a gross outrage upon the female sex in general, and upon Christian females in particular. Two, or three, or four Christian ladies, having confidence in each other, and desiring to grow in grace, cannot meet weekly, for the purpose of mutually confessing their sins, if they have committed any in the interval; telling each other kindly and faithfully of their faults; reviewing their temptations, and the manner in which each was delivered from temptation; and praying with and for each other; without huddling their heads together, and gloating, and chuckling, and becoming excited, over matters connected with sexual intercourse. He has laid all the libertines in the land under special obligations to him. They owe him a vote of thanks. He has effectually endorsed the leading tenet of their creed—Female virtue is not to be trusted. And here is the reason why he would not tolerate band-meetings in the Presbyterian Church. Just think of the wife of the Rev. ——. No! I will not dishonor the name of any Christian lady by connecting it with the dark supposition. Just think, then, of any four respectable Presbyterian ladies of your acquaintance, met for the purposes contemplated by band-meetings, leaning over towards each other, and proposing to each other questions so vile that the translator and vender of them was

arrested as dangerous to public morals, and you have, embodied, the great reason why Mr. Ross would not tolerate those meetings within the pale of his communion.

Perhaps it will be said in reply to this, that, as Roman Catholic females may be so far corrupted by the Confessional as to hear and answer such questions, there is no reason to think that Protestant females might not through the influence of band-meetings. But Catholic females do not voluntarily propose to each other the questions of the Confessional. The priest claims to stand in the place of God. They are given to understand that they depend upon him for the forgiveness of their sins. In order to forgive them, he must know what sins they have committed, and what are the aggravating or mitigating circumstances. This knowledge is also necessary to enable him to determine the proper amount of penance or satisfaction. God is omniscient; but the priest must obtain his knowledge by the Confessional. The modesty of the confessor is found to be an obstacle to that freeness of confession which is required, and hence measures are resorted to to overcome it. The Catechism of the Council of Trent speaks thus:—"Still more pernicious is the conduct of those who, yielding to a foolish bashfulness, cannot induce themselves to confess their sins. Such persons are to be encouraged by exhortation, and to be reminded that there is no reason whatever why they should yield to such foolish delicacy; that to no one can it appear surprising if persons fall into sin, the common malady of the human race, and the natural appendage of human misery." Elliot on "Romanism," page 313. It is also found necessary to aid the persons confessing. This is done in part by books, in which they are instructed to catechize themselves before confession, and in which the topics of confession, if not the questions, are supplied. Besides this, the priest must ask questions. For this work he is carefully trained, in his education for the priestly office. He is instructed to propose his questions cautiously, so as to draw out the penitent by degrees, as a skilful lawyer cross-questions his witness, and leads him on to disclosures not intended. Thus the anticipated hinderances from female modesty are gradually overcome. It is also worthy of remark that the questions of the Romish Confessional are framed for unconverted, and even, for very wicked persons. What is

there like this in band-meetings? Two or three persons, desiring a more intimate communion on subjects closely connected with their present and eternal salvation, than is otherwise provided for, agree to meet together. To secure the freedom of intercourse desired, they must be of the same sex, and all married or single; and all pledged to a full and candid disclosure of their spiritual condition. The latter requirement is obviously necessary to secure confidence, as very few would be willing to uncover their hearts before those who assume the privilege of sitting in cautious reserve and acting as mentors only. Now to suppose that Protestant females, uniting, of their own accord, from such motives, and for such purposes, would *voluntarily* propose to each other questions so revolting to the modesty of Roman Catholic females that they must be introduced by degrees, and artfully prefaced with such as are calculated to throw them off their guard—the answers to which are extorted by the conviction that they are necessary to absolution, and that without absolution from the priest there can be no salvation, is to suppose that unconverted Roman Catholic females are far superior in modesty to converted Protestant females. Surely these Protestant women must be wanton jades! It must be necessary to keep them under the rigid surveillance of the opposite and purer sex. It will never do to let them have meetings for mutual confession and prayer, no matter what St. James may say. Let their privileges of associating together be restricted to tea parties and sewing parties, where they may indulge in the more [profitable business of talking over everybody's sins but their own.

NO. IX.

WHILE Mr. Ross contends that band-meetings are identical in principle with the Romish Confessional, he admits that there is some difference between them, but the reader must not suppose that the difference is in favor of Methodism.

He seems very moderate, it is true, when he tells us that these meetings are the Romish Confessional in the bud, but in illustrating the difference, he makes them out to be far worse. He says: "The class-meeting Confessional, if carried out as Mr. Wesley planned it, and as it is in the Discipline, would make the Methodist Church the most hideous school for scandal in the world." He thinks it impossible that they should keep each other's secrets. He admits that the priest, "good fat fellow, can keep the secrets of his confessional," but then he is in different circumstances from the Methodists. "He has no wife, nor child, nor neighbor, nor farm, nor merchandize—he has nothing to do all day long, but to drink cold water and say his prayers. He can, therefore, afford to keep secrets. Besides, he believes that the devil will catch him if he tells; or, if Satan spares him, he knows the Pope will not. The priest, therefore, will give up anything in the world, even his virginity, rather than tell the secrets of the confessional." So much for the priests. "But what," he adds, "shall these eight hundred thousand Methodists do with other people's sin? Why they will burst unless they tell them, and tell them they will." In reply to all this, I ask—would it be no discredit to a Methodist to violate the confidence reposed in him? Does he not believe that the devil will catch him if he be guilty of treachery? Would he be in no danger from the Discipline? If the Methodists believed that God has from all eternity unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass—that those who are predestinated unto life are so predestinated without any foresight of faith or good works, or any moral dispositions, or desires, as conditions, or causes of their election—that they may fall into grievous sins, which scandalize others, as well as wound their own consciences, and yet cannot fall from their state of justification—that the devil cannot catch them, no matter how treacherous they may be—that they may be carnal and sold under sin, and yet be as holy as St. Paul was—if the Methodists believed this, they might violate the trusts confided to them with as little hesitancy as Mr. Ross violates the truth. But they hold to a very different faith. Moreover, if mutual confession between three or four persons must necessarily produce scandal upon so large a scale, what must be the effect of a system which pro-

vides for confessions of licentiousness before the whole congregation? In the discipline of the Presbyterian Church, we find the following:—

“At the next meeting of the Presbytery, the charges *shall* be read to him, and he shall be called upon to say *whether* he is guilty or not. If he *confess*, and the matter be *base and flagitious*; such as *drunkenness, uncleanness*, or crimes of a *higher* nature, however penitent he may appear, to the satisfaction of all, the presbytery must, without delay, suspend him from the exercise of his office, or depose him from the ministry; and, if the way be clear for the purpose, appoint him a due time to *confess publicly before the congregation offended*, and to profess his penitence.” Confession of Faith, page 402.

I have put in italics the parts to which I would direct special attention. What will Dr. Converse say to this? Suppose the man whom he reports as having confessed in class-meeting, with such disastrous results, had been a Presbyterian minister, and had confessed, first to his Presbytery, and then to his congregation, would the husband of the guilty woman have felt any more comfortable, or the tongue of scandal found less employment?

Mr. Ross draws a very vulgar and ludicrous caricature of the nature and process of band-meeting confessions. He says: “It is the swap of sins.” He represents sister Sally Slanderwink as “relieved of her burden,” and as having “taken into her bosom sister Susan’s, and that of all the rest of the band. She goes home. She looks solemn and mysterious. And as her head bows over the shuttle, or bobs at the flax wheel, or jerks as she pulls the needle—no wonder her eyebrows are drawn up, and her mouth is drawn down, and the gray eye winks from time to time—for she has the sins of a whole band-meeting of women on her soul, except her own. And sister Susan Slacktwisted has the same. And brother Tommy Love-to-tell-it, and brother Christopher Can’t-keep-it, have, in like manner, each of them, the guilt of a whole band of men on their consciences—except their own. And so have all in the two thousand bands.” I cannot be expected to answer all this. Those who can believe it, can believe anything. But I will take the liberty to suggest to Mr. Ross that when he writes again, he may experiment

upon the "amazing greenness" of some of his readers, by assuring them that when a Methodist fails to effect a swap of his sins, he sells them for so much a sin, and gives the money to the preacher. This will doubtless excite their pious horror and their patriotism to the highest pitch, and they will be ready to exclaim, Away with the Methodists from the earth: they are not fit to live. He need not fear that he will not be believed. Dr. Converse will doubtless undertake to furnish examples.

We may also be allowed to amuse and instruct ourselves a little by a comparison between the Methodist confessional and the Presbyterian confessional; and we are ready to concede that the latter has the advantage greatly. There is no "swap of sins" here. So far from one having to bear the sins of many, many bear the sins of one. The drunken, or unclean minister lays the burden upon the whole Presbytery, which they take and distribute, giving to all an equal portion. And then the burden of each is to be still farther reduced by a subdivision of the whole among the congregation. By this time the dividend of responsibility will be so small that none of the brethren or sisters will have occasion to draw up the eyebrows, or draw down the mouth, or wink with the eye, or in any way look solemn and mysterious. This is certainly a much better arrangement. Perhaps we may attend to this matter at our next General Conference.

Another point at which Romanism is superior to Methodism is this—"The Roman Catholic is not afraid to trust his priest almost to the fullest extent. The Methodist is afraid to trust his brotherhood to the same degree. Hence he must necessarily give a false pledge when he enters the band. It is preposterous to think that any one will tell all his sins," &c. Now in opposition to this, let it be kept in mind:—

1. That particular confession is not required in class-meetings.
2. That no one is required to be a member of a band.
3. That those who are united in bands are supposed to have confidence in each other.
4. That they can withdraw from their respective bands at pleasure.

Let these facts be considered, and the alleged necessity for hypocrisy is dissipated. Indeed, this objection is a hard thrust at the Christian religion. Highwaymen, burglars, counterfeiters, can keep each other's secrets, but Christian men and women must necessa-

rily violate solemn pledges voluntarily assumed. They cannot confide in each other's honor and veracity. As to men associating in these bands for the purpose of playing the hypocrite, we think it, at least, very improbable. Hypocrites would shrink from such an ordeal. They would be sure of detection. They would much prefer, with Mr. Ross, a system in which they would not be so closely interrogated.

The editor of the *CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE*, a Baptist paper, published in this city, has been so pleased with the articles of Mr. Ross, that he has republished them, in whole or in part. He, too, disclaims any intention "to attack the members of another religious body." But he thinks it both our privilege and our duty to examine the subject of church organization, both in general, and in its particular developments. He says "he shall always be happy to see his Congregational system tested." We fully agree with him as to the right and the obligation to examine whatever systems of doctrine or policy solicit public acceptance and support, and may yet do him the favor of testing his Congregational system. But we shall endeavor to do it with some decency of manner. He, also, "is struck with the resemblance which the Methodist organization bears to that of Romanism." He has a long editorial upon the subject of confession, in which he admits the duty of confessing to men, but thinks that the confession should be exclusively to the person offended. "It will not do," he says, "for us to confess to another. What does it matter to A, that we have sinned against B; or to B, that we have sinned against C? What good could it do to them or ourselves, to confess to them sins committed against other persons? None whatever." But what shall be done when the sin is not so much against any particular individual, as against society—involving deeply the interests of the church? Must there be no confession in such case?

In reference to the band-meeting, he thinks that the "regulation which specifies that the members of the band-meeting must be all males, or all females, all married, or all unmarried, is of itself sufficient to condemn them." Does he intend to lay down the licentious principle that whatever may with propriety be said or done, in the most select company, of two or three, may with equal propriety be said or done, in promiscuous companies, including male and female,

married and single, young and old? Or would he deny to Christians the privilege of intercourse on all matters that interest their consciences, unless they are prepared to discuss them in a public and promiscuous assembly? However plausible this sentence may appear at first sight, it is as superficial in sense, as it is oracular in the manner of its announcement.

I have already said that band-meetings have nearly gone into disuse, at least in this country, but I have not availed myself of this fact in the argument upon their merits, because our Discipline is justly responsible for them. I am not aware that they have been discontinued on account of any injurious practical results. Several causes have doubtless contributed to their discontinuance. In the first place, they are perfectly voluntary. Secondly, they are very liable to be broken up by marriages and removals, and it is not easy to find persons with whom we can consent to be upon such terms of intimacy; and, when we find them, they may not reciprocate fully the feelings we entertain towards them. Thirdly, the great increase of spiritually-minded ministers and members, of different denominations, makes it easier to find persons with whom we can communicate on matters of private interest, whenever emergencies compel us to do so. And it is a very solemn question whether the Methodists of the present day discharge the obligations in respect to spiritual communion, as faithfully as their fathers were wont.

Perhaps nothing that I can say will place this institution in a clearer and more satisfactory light than it is placed in by the simple history which Mr. Wesley gives of its origin. *Class-meetings* were first instituted. Of their influence he thus speaks: "By the blessing of God upon their endeavors to help one another, many found the pearl of great price. 'Being justified by faith, they had peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' These felt a more tender affection than before, to those who were partakers of like precious faith; and hence arose such a confidence in each other, that they poured out their souls into each other's bosom. Indeed, they had great need to do so; for the war was not over, as they had supposed; but they had still to wrestle both with flesh and blood, and with principalities and powers; so that temptations were on every side, and often temptations of such

a kind, as they knew not how to speak of in a class; in which persons of every sort, young and old, men and women, met together.

"These, therefore, wanted some means of closer union; they wanted to pour out their hearts without reserve, particularly with regard to the sin which did still easily beset them, and the temptations which were most apt to prevail over them. And they were the more desirous of this, when they observed it was the expressed advice of an inspired writer: 'Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.'" To meet the wants thus described, he instituted band-meetings. Of their results he thus speaks: "Great and many are the advantages which have ever since flowed from this closer union of the believers with each other. They prayed for one another, that they might be healed of the faults they had confessed, and it was so. The chains were broken, the bands were burst in sunder, and sin had no more dominion over them. Many were delivered from the temptations out of which, till then, they found no way to escape. They were built up in our most holy faith. They rejoiced in the Lord more abundantly. They were strengthened in love, and more effectually provoked to abound in every good work."—*Wesley's Works*, vol. v. pp. 182, 183.

NO. X.

MR. ROSS, in his third number, attacks that part of the economy of our church which relates to its property and its finances. He dedicates it to "Judges and Lawyers," and prefixes, as a motto, the following text of Scripture: "1 Peter ii. 5.—And through covetousness, shall they, with feigned words, make merchandize of you." He undertakes to show that "*Methodism is a great money power*," explaining himself to mean "that there is a great money power under the control of Methodist preachers;" and commences his proof by asserting that "the Itinerant Preachers have secured to

themselves, as far as they could, the absolute control of all the Methodist meeting-houses, parsonages, camp-grounds, &c., in the United States." He does not represent this as an unforeseen result of measures designed to effect a different object, but as a "usurpation." He asserts that "the Methodist preachers intended to secure the control, and they have done so." He quotes largely from the Discipline in support of his allegations. It is not necessary to copy his quotations, as he brings out to special notice the points upon which he relies. He thus exhibits his proof:—

"Observe—The deed of settlement stipulates that the trustees to whom the ground is conveyed, shall build thereon a house for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, (or South since the division,) according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted at their General Conferences.—And the trustees shall at all times forever hereafter permit such ministers and preachers belonging to the said Church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference, or by the Annual Conferences authorized by the said General Conference, to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein."

Now what is there in this to sustain the charge in view of which it is brought forward? The property in question is not deeded to a preacher, or to any number of preachers, or to the General Conference, or to annual conferences, but to trustees, *laymen*. Nor do these trustees hold it for the special benefit of the preachers, but "for the use of the members of the Methodist E. Church." It is, indeed, provided that the trustees shall permit such ministers and preachers as are duly authorized to preach and administer the ordinances therein, but this confers upon them no rights that are not supposed to be possessed by all pastors of whatever denomination they may be. What would be the condition of a Presbyterian pastor, denied the privilege of using the church edifice, belonging to the church of which he is the pastor, "to preach and expound God's Holy Word therein?" The reason for this provision of the Discipline is obvious. If the deeds and charters of our churches did not secure to the ministers, duly appointed to preach in them, according to the economy of our church, the privilege of so doing, it would be impossible to

maintain our itineracy. Reasonable men would not agree to be sent here and there, as Methodist preachers are, with an uncertainty whether the use of the pulpits, to which they are sent, would be granted or denied them. In short, this clause merely confers upon them the privileges conferred upon every Presbyterian pastor by his installation into that office. And here the control of the minister terminates. He has no right of property in these houses, beyond that of any other individual member. The entire body of ministers have not the power to sell, or to appropriate to their own use in any way, the value of a single brick of all the churches held by the tenure prescribed by the Discipline. They cannot even make the churches liable in any way for their salaries. If all the bishops, and other itinerant preachers, of the denomination, were starving, there is no authority, in this deed of settlement, to sell a single church for their relief. Moreover, they have no right to interfere, directly and authoritatively, with any use to which the churches may be appropriated by the trustees. The pastor has no right to the key. He cannot open or close the church for any purpose. The trustees may abuse it—may allow it to be desecrated—but they are not responsible to him. His right is restricted to the use of the pulpit, or to the use of the house for conducting religious services, and in this, the trustees cannot control him. They cannot put others in his place. The language of the Discipline is entirely incompatible with the supposition that these houses are under the absolute control of the itinerant preachers. Mark! "The trustees shall at all times *permit*," &c. That is, according to Mr. Ross' doctrine, the preachers, who have the absolute control of the property, shall be *permitted* to use it, in a certain way, by those who have *not* the control of it.

He endeavors to sustain his point by a gross misrepresentation of this passage.—He quotes "Dr. Schmucker, a distinguished Lutheran minister of Gettysburg, Pa.," as saying: "It is the concurrent opinion of the members of our bar, that the property thus deeded, belongs, *not* to the Congregation, but to the Methodist Church in the United States, represented by the General Conference. I showed the Deed to seven lawyers, being all I could find when I had it with me, and this was their unanimous decision." Mr. Ross undertakes to

simplify this by an example. He supposes that the Methodist society at Kingsport has built a house of worship, and deeded it, according to the deed of settlement, and objects, "that they would have no more right to that house than the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in any part of the United States (or in any part of the South since the division). The General Conference would hold that house for the members of the whole church, and not for the members of the Kingsport congregation exclusively.—And the Kingsport congregation would lose that house, even if they, the very people who built it, should unanimously withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church." In reply to this, I remark.—The General Conference does, indeed, represent the Methodist Episcopal Church, but not as holding its property. It does not hold it, either for its own use, or the use of the members. It is not a corporate body. It has no existence in law. It is incapable of holding property. The M. E. Church, considered as holding property, is represented by trustees, and if Mr. Ross' prejudices did not render his perceptions very obtuse, he would see that he was contradicting himself. How can the property be legally held by trustees according to the deed of settlement, and at the same time by the General Conference? But what shall we do with the unanimous decision of seven lawyers? If that decision is that the property does not belong to the congregation exclusively, we have no objection to it. And this, I presume, is all that they meant. The framers of the Discipline have intentionally avoided vesting the exclusive right to our houses of worship in the congregations that may worship in them. And we are astonished that intelligent and well-read men should, with the history of the past before them, object to this arrangement. The design of it is to prevent them from being wrested from the purposes for which they were built. Let a few Presbyterians, or Methodists, erect a church, by dint of great effort and sacrifice, with the intent that it shall be used in perpetuity for the promulgation of those doctrines which they hold to be the pure Gospel, and then vest the right to control it in the congregation exclusively; before its founders are in their graves, its pulpit may be prostituted to the diffusion of Unitarianism or Universalism. All this may take place without any change of sentiment on the part of the enterprising few by whom it

was built. Designing men may creep in, and induce others to join them, for the sole purpose of turning the church to a use abhorrent to the feelings of those by whose labor and money it was founded. Upon this subject the Congregationalists of New England have had bitter experience. Churches built by the Puritan fathers have in great numbers fallen into the hands of Unitarians.

It may seem a hard case that the people who build a church cannot take it with them in case they unanimously withdraw from the M. E. Church; but then it is retained for the purpose for which it was built. Besides, the principle, however inconvenient its operation may be in some instances, is not only reasonable, but indispensable. What would be the condition of society if men were at liberty to resume their subscriptions to any given object, whenever they might change their minds respecting its claims?

It is possible to imagine a motive for this objection not very honorable to those who make it. Is Mr. Ross desirous of appropriating to the Presbyterians, without the necessity of purchasing them, places of worship built and held by the Methodists?

But while we admit this principle, and contend for it, we do not admit certain inferences drawn from it. For instance, we do not admit that the congregation building a church, and worshipping in it "have no more right to it than the members of the Methodist E. Church in any part of the United States." The immediate control of any church is in the hands of trustees belonging to the congregation, or society, worshipping in it. And there is no possible way in which that congregation can be supplanted, either by Methodists, or by any other people.

Nor does the Discipline authorize the assertion that the members of the Methodist E. Church have no control of their houses as to who shall preach in them. No man can become a preacher in our church without the consent of the laity, formally expressed, on several successive occasions. It is true that the deed requires that those who have been admitted to the ministry, with the consent of the members, and are duly appointed to particular fields of labor, shall have the use of the pulpits within the range of their pastoral jurisdiction. But they cannot bring whom they please into those pulpits. If

they attempt to introduce any other than those designated by the deed, the trustees can interpose and prevent it.

There are some other points in the deed of settlement to which Mr. Ross refers, as going to prove that the absolute control of our churches is vested in the itinerant preachers, viz: that the "deed requires that every vacancy in the board of trustees shall be filled by the nominees of the minister, or preacher in charge of said church;" that it "requires that the board shall be responsible to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, and that in all cases where a new board is to be created, it shall be done (unless forbidden by a statute) by the appointment of the preacher in charge, or the presiding elder of the district;" that "the Methodist preachers do, in their deed of discipline, refuse absolutely to admit of any charter, deed or conveyance for any house of worship to be used by them, unless its provisions be in accordance with the true meaning and purpose of the deed of settlement;" and that to prevent embarrassing church debts, "the discipline makes it the duty of the Quarterly Conference of every circuit where it is contemplated to build a house or houses of worship, to secure the ground, according to this deed, and before any such building shall be commenced, three-fourths of the money, according to the estimate, shall be secured."

But what is there, in any part, or in all of this, which goes to show that the preachers are invested with absolute control of the property? If they have it not before, they certainly cannot acquire it by merely nominating persons to fill vacancies in the board of trustees. Nor can the responsibility of these boards to the Quarterly Conferences give them that control. This provision proves, not only that they do not hold the property, but that those who do hold it are not responsible to them for the manner in which it is used. Nor is a step taken towards assuming this control, by determining not to recognize as belonging to the denomination, churches not deeded according to the Discipline. In fact, as the Discipline does not give them this control, *this determination puts it out of their power ever to acquire it.* The reason of this determination is plain and unexceptionable. If the people choose to build churches, and deed them in such a way that the preachers regularly sent may be denied access to them, they may do so; but the preachers are no more compelled to

supply these pulpits than a Presbyterian minister is to accept a call to a church not founded upon Presbyterian principles. In taking this stand, they are but exercising a right which ministers of all denominations are supposed to possess. Mr. Wesley is severely censured for saying, "If the trustees will settle the Birstal house upon the Methodist plan, I will sign the deed with all my heart, but if they build a house for a Presbyterian meeting house, I will not, dare not have anything to do with it." Mr. Ross exclaims at this:—"No! No! Mr. Wesley would not, dared not have anything to do with a deed of settlement upon the Presbyterian principle, which gave the control of the Birstal house to the people who built it. No! No! Mr. Wesley would only sign a deed upon the Methodist plan—that is to say, his own plan." And this was perfectly reasonable. Mr. Wesley saw that the "Presbyterian principle" was incompatible with the itinerancy. If the people desired to be Presbyterians, they were at liberty to go, but they could not amalgamate two different systems. And what could Presbyterians do with houses deeded upon the Methodist plan? Particular regulations must be congruous with the system to which they belong, or they will operate disadvantageously, however wise they may be when placed in other associations.

Mr. Ross can think of no other motive for the measure to prevent our churches from being encumbered with debt, than that it is designed to secure the absolute control to the preacher. Is it, then, good policy for congregations to involve themselves in debt? A series of very able essays were recently written by a Presbyterian minister—the Rev. Mr. Ramsay of this city—for the express purpose of showing the obligation of churches to conform to the principle of this measure, and portraying in strong colors, the injury which results to the cause of religion from embarrassing church debts.

Mr. Ross affects great caution in his statements. He asserts that "this absolute control is possessed as far as possible in every part of the United States." He does not assert that "every house of worship, in which Methodists claim complete worship, is thus held by the preachers." He thinks it possible that there are "some exceptions, from the laws of certain states or territories being in the way, or other causes." He says, "What we affirm, is, that the preachers have in

their Discipline, and in the efforts of the Conference, done all they could to obtain the control of the church property—and that they have succeeded as far as possible.” “Methodism, we know, like Romanism, will hold off its hands for a while when it cannot grasp.” Does he mean to intimate by this that there are states or territories whose laws prevent the people from transferring their property to whom they please? In what part of the United States is a congregation prevented, by law, from building a church and conveying it by deed to the minister, making it his property? There are states and territories which provide by law for the appointment of trustees, and others which have special provisions for securing church property to congregations, and the Discipline authorizes the Annual Conferences to make such modification in the deeds as they may find the different usages and customs of law require. And in fact a very large number of our churches elect their trustees annually, by the vote of the male members.

Mr. Ross estimates the value of the church property of the Methodist Church throughout the United States to be four millions of dollars. I do not care to ascertain whether this calculation be true or false. It is sufficient to show that the property is not under the control of the preachers.

NO. XI.

IN my last I replied to the charge that the itinerant preachers have secured to themselves the absolute control of all the meeting-houses, parsonages, &c., belonging to the denomination. Mr. Ross also asserts that they have “secured to themselves the control of immense funds and resources.” These funds are (1) “The Chartered Fund,” amounting, he has been informed, to “some thirty thousand dollars.” (2) “The Book Concern,” the capital of which, he says, “exceeds six hundred thousand dollars.” (3) All the voluntary contributions of the members of the Methodist Church—whether in weekly class, or society, or quarterly, or annually—and all

quarterly or yearly collections." He subsequently adds to this enumeration, collections made at love-feasts and camp-meeting, and concludes that the annual revenue of Methodist preachers must be enormous.

Now what is the truth in relation to these charges? The Chartered Fund is under the control of a Board of Trustees, *none of whom are itinerant preachers.*

The Book Concern is, indeed, under the management and control of the itinerant preachers, but without any "usurpation." It originated with them. Its object is to aid them in diffusing religious knowledge—not to make money. For a time it struggled with great difficulties, but through prudent management, it not only continued solvent, but increased its capital, and has recently yielded considerable profit. The possibility of this result was seen, and provided for as follows:—"The profits arising from the Book Concern, after a sufficient capital to carry on the business is retained, shall be regularly applied to the support of the distressed travelling preachers and their families, the widows and orphans of deceased preachers." None of the collections referred to are under the control of the preachers—not one. They all pass into the hands of officers regularly appointed for their receipt and disbursement, and the *preacher has not the right to dispose of a single cent, except what is officially paid over to him, by the stewards, for his support, the amount of which is predetermined not by himself, but by others.* These are facts incontrovertible, and Mr. Ross and Dr. Converse might easily have known them, if they did not.

It is also asserted by Mr. Ross that "the Methodist preachers have provided for themselves a more ample support than that possessed by the ministry of any other denomination in the United States." He affects a great display of proof, quoting largely from the Discipline, in relation to the "allowance to the ministers and preachers," &c., and calculates the salary of a Methodist preacher, with a wife and five children, upon a country circuit, to be \$700. It seems that the subject of Methodist preacher's salaries has attracted the attention of sage economists of different sects. Mr. Ross quotes several estimates, all of which he considers to be entitled to very great respect. The first is by Dr. Musgrave, a Presbyterian minister. He gives \$664 66. The next is by Dr. Schmucker,

the gentleman referred to in my last number. His is \$693. The third is by Dr. Annan, another Presbyterian minister. He says \$600. The next is by the Rev. R. S. Storrs, who says, in a letter to the Home Missionary, that Methodist preachers in Canada, receive between \$700 and \$800. The next is from the "Christian Intelligencer," of N. Y., the organ of the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church, and is \$800. The next is from the "Mutual Rights," a paper belonging to the Protestant Methodists—it is \$747. The last is from "Tracts for the Times," by a Protestant Episcopalian, and is from \$700 to \$800.

"These estimates," we are told, "are all made for country circuits." It is affirmed that "in large towns and cities, where the items of house rent, table expenses and fuel would be greatly higher, the salaries of Methodist preachers would be much more." Here the testimony of Dr. Musgrave is introduced, "who informs us that a Methodist gentleman of Baltimore informed him that the pastor of the Light Street Church received \$1200 exclusive of house rent." We are also informed that "Dr. Durbin, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, [in an action for libel in New York, brought by Azor Hoyt against Rev. Messrs. Waugh, Emory, Bangs, and J. Collard,] testified as follows:—'My salary is \$1250 annually—that of Mr. Bangs I think \$1500 or upwards—that of Mr. Merrit about \$1200—that of Mr. Waugh \$1600—that of Mr. Mason is, I think, over \$1000 and under \$1500.' " To this Mr. Ross adds, "Now, if to this money salary we are to understand that these gentlemen received a furnished house, rent free, even if table expenses and fuel be included in the above sums, then the amount would swell up to a very respectable remuneration, certainly."

I hesitate not to pronounce these calculations wholly unfounded and extravagant. I do not say that no Methodist preachers, upon large and wealthy circuits, or districts, receive even the largest amount given as the average of country salaries, including in it house rent, fuel and table expenses, and the interest of the money vested in furniture, but I deny that the average bears any comparison with these estimates. They are more suitable to large towns, and to cities of the smaller class. And there are innumerable instances, throughout the whole field of Methodism, in which, from various causes,

the support afforded is very inadequate, requiring great self-denial on the part of many very valuable men. A single thought will convince every reasonable man that this must of necessity be the case. The Methodist E. Church has been organized but little over half a century. Its origin was exceedingly humble. The poor everywhere flocked to its standard. Many of them were not only unable to give, but needed pecuniary assistance. It never enjoyed or desired state patronage. Now and then, amidst great obloquy, a wealthy individual joined it. But its little means, instead of being lavished upon its preachers, were wanted to erect churches, and to found academies and colleges. These have sprung up in great numbers all over the land. To their existence the preachers have contributed in various ways. They have not withheld their subscriptions, even in the midst of great poverty. They have often exhausted their strength and spirits in soliciting subscriptions, and making collections for them. In many instances, they have thrown off their coats, and done the work of day laborers. And, after all, it has been a common thing for the lay officers of the churches, in estimating their support, to say:—The preacher ought to have so much, but the church is in debt; we are afraid the society could not raise it, and meet other obligations. Suppose we say so much; and, if it should prove insufficient, we must make an effort to add to it. And they have, in many instances, decided upon \$100, or \$150, or perhaps \$200 less than they have acknowledged would be a reasonable support; thus indirectly compelling the preacher to pay so much annually towards meeting the expenses of the church; as he finds it safer to live within his income, be it ever so small, than to rely upon an uncertain and improbable addition. I could give many facts illustrative of the distresses of Methodist preachers, but it is not necessary to the refutation of Mr. Ross. It should be kept in mind, however, that the circumstances of the church are gradually and constantly improving, in the aggregate, and there is, consequently, of late, an improved provision, as a general thing, for the support of its ministry.

Respecting the alleged salaries of Methodist preachers in Baltimore and New York, I would say that none of the individuals named by Mr. Ross were pastors of churches at the time, but agents and editors of the Book Concern, receiving

their support from that institution. And these salaries included their entire support, neither house, nor furniture, nor table expenses being supplied in addition thereto. I am authorized by Dr. Durbin to say, that this was all that was allowed him to support a family, consisting of a wife and four children, in the city of New York, and that out of that sum he paid \$300 house rent, and provided his own furniture. I have the same authority for saying that another of the parties named by Mr. Ross, had, when he left the Book Concern, expended \$400 more than he had received, and that he refused to allow a friend to solicit for him an additional appropriation to cover this loss, and continues a loser to that extent, to this day. As to the pastor of the Light Street Church, in Baltimore, Dr. Musgrave was replied to in a pamphlet, by a Methodist local preacher, in which is found the following certificate:—

“This is to certify that I was the preacher in charge, stationed at the Light Street Church, in the year 1842, and that the whole of my salary was eight hundred and fifty dollars; including ‘allowance,’ table expenses, fuel, and everything else, except the privilege of occupying the parsonage belonging to the church, free of rent; and that this was all that I received will appear by reference to the steward’s books.

“JOB GUEST.

“*Baltimore, June 29th, 1843.*”

The reader must now allow me to direct his attention to the manner in which these estimates are made by Mr. Ross, and his company. It is somewhat curious. But I must premise a brief exposition of the manner in which Methodist preachers are provided for and supported. They did not, at the beginning, nor do they now, enter into stipulations with the people of their charges. It is true the Discipline names a certain sum, but this is not to be viewed in the light of a contract legally binding, as when a Presbyterian minister accepts a call in which the church authorities presenting it specify a definite sum as his salary. The design of naming any sum in the Discipline, so far as I understand it, was this:—As the Methodist ministry offer their services to the community without waiting for a call, leaving it to the people to receive or reject them, it seemed but reasonable that they should give some intimation of their views in relation to ministerial sup-

port. That the people might not be deterred from receiving them by the fear of heavy expenses, or have their consciences burdened by obligations which, though exclusively moral, might be embarrassing, the sum determined upon was very small. This arrangement also prevents popular men from placing their talents in the market, or oppressing those to whom they are sent by exactions exceeding their ability. It also tends to equalize the support of the ministry, so that none might be depressed and driven from the ministry, while others were receiving an abundance. In particular, it prevents one of the preachers upon a circuit from enjoying a monopoly of the support through official favoritism. The provisions of the Discipline at present are \$100 for an unmarried preacher. For a married preacher \$100 for himself, \$100 for his wife, \$16 for each of his children below 7 years of age, and \$24 for each over 7 and under 14. This is exclusive of house rent. But as this, in many places, would be wholly insufficient, it is further provided that an addition shall be made under the head of "fuel and table expenses."

Now, in making these estimates, these learned gentlemen do not take pains to inquire what is actually allowed to Methodist preachers, but, after counting up the amount specified by the Discipline, they proceed to calculate how much, *according to their own judgment*, would be necessary to make a preacher and his family comfortable, *according to their own notions of comfort*. The following is Mr. Ross's estimate, "made to suit East Tennessee and Western Virginia:"—

Annual allowance for the preacher, -	-	-	\$100
do do for his wife, -	-	-	100
do do for two children, above 7 years of age, each \$24, -	-	-	48
do do for, say three children, under 7, each \$16, -	-	-	48
do do table expenses and fuel, estimated at			234
do do traveling expenses estimated at			25

\$600

The above does not include the entertainment of the preacher and his horse while from home on his circuit, which must be

100

\$700

He demands of his readers if any of these estimates are too high. I am not very anxious to prove them too high, but I cannot help thinking that if the committees for estimating fuel and table expenses could henceforth be composed of Presbyterian, Lutheran, Congregational and Protestant Episcopal ministers, instead of laymen of our own denomination, a much more liberal allowance would be made for our support than now is, or ever will be. He puts down \$234 for fuel and table expenses, but, in many instances, no allowance is made for these, and when one is made, it may be a very small sum, say \$10, or \$20, or \$30, not enough to supply the articles from which it derives its name, but just enough, when put with other allowances, to enable the preacher to live in a very frugal way.

The manner in which Mr. Ross estimates the actual support of an unmarried preacher, is somewhat amusing. He puts down \$100, which he calls "his money allowance by the Discipline." To this he adds \$228 12½ for the entertainment of himself and his horse. Next, the \$25 for traveling expenses, making in all \$353 12½. He then allows \$53 12½ to be deducted "for lack of full allowance," leaving \$300 as the sum. This, he thinks, is a very liberal allowance, especially when compared "with the support actually received from the churches, by the ministers, on the average, in the synod of Tennessee." But there is one very striking and inexcusable fallacy in this calculation. He charges, as salary, the keeping of the preacher's horse. This would be very well if he could perform all the duties required of him without the aid of a horse, and kept one merely for his own gratification. But this is not the case. The services of a horse are indispensable. Now in all other cases, when the services of a horse are required, the employer is at the expense of both procuring and feeding one. Or if the person employed brings his own to the service of his employer, he expects wages for his horse as well as for himself, notwithstanding the animal is kept at the employer's expense. But Mr. Ross would require that the person employed should bring his horse to the service of his employer, and not only receive no hire for the animal, but be charged for his stabling and provender. And Dr. Converse thinks that this is "very just and discriminating." These men cannot reasonably object should this rule be made

to apply to Presbyterian as well as to Methodist preachers. Let us suppose, then, that a Presbyterian minister complains to his people that his salary is too small. They admit that it is, and propose to enlarge it. But they cannot raise any more money. There is, however, one available expedient, and they adopt it. You can buy a good horse, say they, for \$80 or \$100. Do so, and employ him faithfully in our service, and we will supply his manger, and charge you \$100. This will be \$100 added to your salary. We commend this mode of increasing salaries to the consideration of the Presbyterian church. It may prove very convenient. Doubtless, some of the ministers, such as Mr. Ross and Dr. Converse, will be delighted with it. We cannot hope that all of them will, for we know that the great body of Presbyterian ministers are not only learned, but also endowed with common sense.

The hire of a horse, at a livery stable, is usually \$1 per day. So that if the Methodist circuit preacher were paid according to the rule observed in similar cases, he would receive a large sum for the services of his horse. This, then, is the state of the case. Many young women who do housework for wages in Philadelphia, or New York, or in other places, receive \$1.50 per week, or \$78 per year, with board and lodgings. To qualify them for the services required, no expensive outfit is necessary—no outlay for implements to work with. All they need is clothes to wear, and these they need under any circumstances. Everything else is provided for them. A common laborer may receive \$12 per month, or \$144 per year, for working upon a farm. Here, too, all the implements and the horse power necessary, are provided by the employer. The laborer is subject to no expense, except for his clothes. But the Methodist preacher must not only furnish himself with clothes suitable for his calling, which brings him into various company. He must also buy a horse and the necessary appendages. He must also procure books. And for his services, and those of his horse, saddle and bridle, and the wear and tear of his library, he receives \$100, his board and lodging—just \$22 more than the house-maid, and \$44 less than the laboring man upon the farm, who are not subjected to these expenses.

NO. XII.

I GAVE, in my last, Mr. Ross's estimate of Methodist preacher's salaries, and exposed the unfair manner in which it was made. His object is to make it appear that they are more liberally supported than the ministry of other denominations. To accomplish this, he greatly overrates the support of the former, and underrates, just as much, the support of the latter. It is impossible to form any just idea of the salaries actually received by Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopalian, Congregationalist, German Reformed, and Lutheran ministers, from the representations here made. Says Mr. Ross, "We have here given eight different estimates of the salaries of the Methodist itinerants, and the lowest calculation is \$600, without reckoning their support while actually riding from home—while the Episcopalian country salary is at the highest nominally, \$600, and very often under \$400—and for the Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches in the United States, the highest country salary by estimate is \$500, and the lowest under \$400." We are told that "in large towns and inferior cities the nominal salaries of Presbyterians, and the denominations mentioned, may range from \$700 to \$1000, something more or less;" and that "in the principal cities, their salaries are greater." The "Episcopal Tract" is quoted as saying that "a few wealthy congregations may give to an old and beloved pastor \$3000 a year, but such cases are rare. From \$1500 to \$2000 is perhaps a good salary in such situations." Mr. Ross farther asserts that \$300 is a greater salary than is received, on the average, by all the Presbyterian ministers in the Synod of Tennessee. He adds, "We feel sure these ministers do not, on the average, get \$250—many of them not \$100, counting everything, and some not \$50 in money. They might starve, but for other resources, or the labor of their hands." He concludes that the salaries of Methodist preachers may "possibly fall a little below the average given for the Episcopalians in the principal cities," and that they would "in large towns

and inferior cities exceed those of the Presbyterians, making the proper advance upon the estimate already given for house rent, furniture, fuel and table expenses."

There is a remarkable caution observed in these statements; not to have them correct, we fear, but to conform them to the purpose for which they are made. Mr. Ross does not tell us, without qualification, that \$500 is the highest country salary received by Presbyterian ministers, but that it is the highest "by estimation." He talks of "the average nominal salaries," and of "the support actually received by ministers *from their churches*." And, after telling us of the very low salaries within the bounds of the Synod of Tennessee, he finds it necessary to refer to "other resources," and "the labor of their hands." It is also remarkable that, with all the parade of figures which his argument exhibits, no sum is mentioned as the salary of Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Dutch Reformed ministers, in the "principal cities." All the information we are favored with upon this point is, that they "would hardly average with the Episcopalians, even leaving out the Bishops."

I have not given myself any concern about the salaries of ministers of other denominations, and consequently have taken no pains to ascertain what they are, but I have occasionally received items of information respecting them, without making inquiry. I heard, ten years ago, from very credible authority, that the salary of a very popular Presbyterian minister, in the city of New York, where I then resided, was \$4000; and that the salary of another, who was not very popular, and who served a comparatively weak church, was \$2500. I have also heard, without making inquiry, that the present salary of a Congregationalist minister, in that city, is \$3000. It has been recently stated, in the newspapers, that the Rev. Dr. Hawks, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, had received a call to a church in New Orleans, with the offer of a salary of \$6000. I know a Methodist preacher who had a salary of \$3000 offered to him, in case he would consent to become the pastor of a Protestant Episcopal Church. but he was a Methodist in principle, and never compromised his principles. I know another popular Methodist preacher who was offered the pastorate of a splendid Protestant Episcopal Church, with the assurance that *any amount of salary*

that he might name should be secured to him; but he preferred to remain a Methodist preacher. And yet neither of these men has received, or hoped to receive, in the Methodist Church, more than \$1000, with the free use of the parsonage, and its furniture; and this amount is given by only two Methodist churches in this city. And, in reference to the small salaries of some Presbyterian ministers, we have no means of knowing whether they receive, in addition to them, appropriations from the American Home Missionary Society, or "other sources," not reckoned as salary "from the churches," or whether they make their living by teaching school, or by some other secular employment, as Methodist *local* preachers do, and yet, unlike Methodist local preachers, receive at the same time salaries from small churches in their respective neighborhoods. If we were to make out an average of the support received from the churches, by Methodist preachers, and include the thousands of talented men who preach every Sabbath, and yet make their living by their secular callings, not only receiving no support from the churches they serve, but frequently paying their own expenses, it would be very small indeed.

There is one way of settling this question which seems never to have occurred to Mr. Ross and his co-workers; that is, to ascertain, by a reference to church officers, and church documents, what are the salaries actually received, in the various cities, and other places, throughout the country, or given portions of it, and what the sums, if any, received in addition to these salaries. I propose the adoption of this measure, and that Philadelphia be taken as the starting point. Let us have duly authorized statements of the salaries of the Protestant Episcopal, Presbyterian, German and Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist, and Methodist ministers of this city. Let a similar research be instituted in New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Baltimore, and throughout the "inferior cities," and large towns, and villages, and country places. There are about twenty Methodist preachers stationed in this city. I will venture to say that the same number of ministers of other denominations can be found, within the same limits, the aggregate of whose salaries is *more than double* the aggregate of the salaries of the former. I have no doubt that for each Methodist pastor, in the land, who re-

ceives \$2000 including everything, and I am not aware that any one does, a Presbyterian minister can be found who receives \$4000; and that for each one who receives \$1500, including everything, a Presbyterian minister can be found who receives \$3000; and that for each one that receives \$1000, including everything, a Presbyterian minister can be found who receives \$2000. What say you, gentlemen? Are you ready for the test?

I would not be understood as objecting to the salaries received by the ministers of other denominations. I am perfectly willing to leave this whole matter to them and the churches they serve. To their own Master they stand or fall, and if they are right, they shall be holden up; for God is able to make them stand. I know that a Methodist preacher, with the highest salary he receives in his most advantageous appointments, must, if he has a large family to support, be cautious how he purchases expensive books, or subscribes for the periodical literature of the day. And I have no doubt that many Presbyterian ministers, with much higher salaries than Methodist preachers receive, expend annually all their means, not in luxurious living, but for a plain subsistence, and for benevolent and literary purposes. Many of them, had they employed themselves as diligently in the profession and practice of the law, or of medicine, or as merchants, would have secured a much larger income. Christianity is indebted to many of them for noble examples of self-denial and disinterestedness.

Mr. Ross endeavors to make it appear that Methodist preachers may receive, in addition to the ample allowances which he has specified, "extra allowances" for "occasional distresses;" and intimates pretty broadly, that such distresses are often feigned. I might, with just as much propriety, intimate that appropriations are made by the American Home Missionary Society, for the relief of the principal Presbyterian ministers of this city—those receiving the highest salaries.

He has resorted to another artifice, as deficient in morality as it is in intelligence. To neutralize the admission that "the salaries of Methodist preachers may possibly fall a little below the average given for Episcopalians in the principal cities," he tells us that if the Methodist bishops "could make

it appear that their reasonable family expenses amounted to one, or two, or three, or four thousand dollars per annum, there is nothing in the book of discipline to prohibit their receiving as much, for there are no limits prescribed to their salaries." And what limits, I ask, does the Presbyterian book of discipline prescribe to the salaries of ministers? What is there in it to prevent them from receiving fifty thousand per annum, if the churches are able and disposed to give it to them?

NO. XIII.

Mr. Ross does not "object to the salaries of Methodist itinerants." They are not too high. "No! No!!" Were they objected to upon such ground, Presbyterian laymen might conclude that what is too much for Methodist preachers is too much for those of their own denomination. This would be a very calamitous inference if reduced to practice. What he objects to, and wants "the whole community to cry out against," are "First, that Methodist preachers have usurped power over the money of the people, and out of it thus amply paid themselves. And, secondly, that while they have done and are doing this, they conceal the fact, and denounce the humble provision made for other ministers by their people."

It is here charged that Methodist preachers practice a deception upon the public in relation to the amount of their support, pretending to be very poorly paid while their salaries are very liberal. Upon this point, Mr. Ross is quite facetious. "Some wag," says he, "from the Rio Grande, says that the horses in that country live on air; and that the Mexicans themselves live on the same, with a large mixture of red pepper. Now, gentle reader, have you not been tempted to think this must be the food of the Methodist itinerancy? When you have heard them tell of their self-denial, have you not been led to imagine that their bodies were only inflated with air, and that their rosy cheeks were just a tinge of pepper

which they had eaten to spice their words against Presbyterian salaries?" "Many a love-sick swain has thought his fair one lived upon ambrosia and nectar. Alas! had he seen her just before dinner, or eleven o'clock at night in her mother's pantry! Just so if our readers will go with us into the crib of Methodism, we will satisfy them perfectly, that Methodist preachers have entertainment for man and horse, which cost more money than air and Mexican red-pepper."

It is easy to make sweeping charges, but let Mr. Ross put his finger upon a single instance, if he can, in which a Methodist preacher has been guilty of misrepresentation in respect to his support, and that man will receive just condemnation from Methodists, both of the ministry and the laity.—Methodist preachers do not tell half of their distresses, and when their tale of suffering is unfolded to the public, it is rarely by the sufferers themselves, but by some one in more favored circumstances, speaking in their behalf, as a matter of duty. Mr. Ross thinks that we have made a fraudulent appropriation of public sympathy, and that it is time to put a stop to the outrage. The Presbyterian ministers, it now seems, are the persons entitled to it. They are the ones who live on air and Mexican red-pepper. The salaries of Methodist preachers are not too high. Not at all. He insists that the estimates which he has made are just what they ought to be, while those of Presbyterian ministers, having the same wants, are *much lower*, so that many of them might starve but for the labor of their hands, or other resources. Have we then found out the secret of Mr. Ross's fiery spirit? Do his people starve him? Have they put him upon a diet of air with a large mixture of Mexican red-pepper to spice his words against Methodism? I call upon the Methodists of East Tennessee to attend to this matter. If his own people will not supply his wants, let them, in self-protection, send him something to eat and drink, and thus save us all from the fury of a man reduced to madness by starvation. We might make a subscription for him here at the north, but we ought, perhaps, first to inquire whether the leading Presbyterian ministers of Baltimore, Philadelphia, N. York, are not secretly pining for want of an adequate support. Their sufferings may engross all our sympathies, and surplus means. Meantime we would suggest to him that his ecclesiastical mother has some nice

Home Missionary pies in her pantry, some of them worth five or six hundred dollars a-piece, with other resources for her hungry sons. If we should enter her pantry before dinner, or at eleven o'clock at night, or at some other time, and secure the largest of them, I shall raise no objection.

Another charge is that while Methodist preachers are so amply paid, they "denounce the humble provision made for Presbyterian and other ministers," and "hold up to the people as lazy drones, living on great salaries, 'men who do not get, on the average, \$250, many of them not \$100, counting everything, and many of them not \$50 in money.' " I deny the charge. I deny that Methodist preachers are in the habit of denouncing the ministers of other denominations, or their salaries, whether great or small. That things have been said in haste, by both Methodists and Presbyterians, which will not sound well in the day when every word shall be brought into judgment, I have no doubt. But I challenge him to bring forward a periodical or publication of any kind, deemed respectable by our denomination, in which Presbyterian ministers are thus assailed. And much of the injudicious reproach which Methodists may have cast upon the ministers of other denominations, in reference to salaries, has originated with the people of those denominations. If one of their ministers leave a church, desiring his services, for another offering him a larger salary, many of them charge him at once with mercenary motives. They do not wait for the Methodists to lead off with the hue and cry. For my part, I believe that much injustice is done to ministers of other denominations through the want of a proper knowledge of the genius of their institutions.

Another objection is that Methodist preachers *pay themselves*. They have usurped control over the money of the people, and do not suffer the people to have any voice in determining their salaries, but "just agree among themselves how much that will take." The only plausible ground for this assertion is that they have devised a *plan* of support, and invested it with legislative authority. But, admitting for the present, merely for the sake of argument, that they do pay themselves, they have entitled themselves to the credit of being the most disinterested men in the world. How have they paid themselves from the beginning? At first, they

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determined that a single man should receive \$64 per annum. After a time, as the church became more numerous and able, they raised it to \$80. In process of time they raised it to \$100. For some time they were required to give account of their presents, but they laid aside this very stringent requisition. They now pay themselves at the rate of \$100 per annum. And, if the preacher be married, \$100 per annum for his wife. And, if he have children, \$16 for each child under seven years of age, and \$24 for each over seven, and under fourteen. And when this is not enough, they leave it to committees of laymen to determine what shall be allowed them in addition thereto. And they have farther enacted that, in case the church fails to pay, either the amount named in the Discipline, or the appropriation of the committee, "it shall not be held accountable for the deficiency as in case of debt." I am inclined to think that some Presbyterian Churches would find their burdens very much lessened, if their ministers would "pay themselves" in the same way. Mr. Ross would like to make the impression, I suppose, that, while the Methodist preachers pay themselves very liberally, Presbyterian ministers have nothing to say in reference to their support, but accept calls irrespective of the amount of salary to be obtained.

He anticipates the probable intimation, that the Methodist preachers do not always receive the amount awarded to them, and undertakes to prove that they do. He gives as demonstration, that they are "round and ruddy," their horses "fat and well groomed," that "their wives and children look remarkably happy;" that they "are always genteel, and often dressed elegantly;" that their "whole air and manner tell that they feel that the world goes well with them;" that "there is neither care nor want of sleep on their faces." He describes the Presbyterian ministers as like "Pharaoh's lean kine," in comparison with the portly Methodists. But supposing the fact to be as he has stated, his reasoning is inconclusive. He is not ignorant of the fact that the countenances of the children of Judah who declined the "daily provision of the king's meat," preferring "pulse to eat and water to drink," "appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." Perhaps the alleged difference between these two classes of ministers, supposing

it to exist, may be accounted for upon the same principle. But there is still another possible solution. According to Mr. Ross, the Methodist ministers appear contented; and if we take him as the representative of Presbyterian ministers, we must conclude that they are remarkably discontented. Now contentment is not ordinarily the result of any outward circumstances. It is a gracious disposition; and is known to have a favorable influence upon the health and the appearance of the body. This latter fact is recognized by Shakespeare, who is generally supposed to have displayed a profound knowledge of human nature. He puts into the mouth of Julius Cæsar the following :

"Let me have men about me that are fat;
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights:
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look."

"Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
While they behold a greater than themselves;
And therefore they are very dangerous."

Thus we see that this real or pretended difference may be accounted for without inferring that the contented fat and rubicund are well fed, and the lean and restless starved.

Mr. Ross also gives, as proofs that Methodist preachers always receive their salaries, the testimony of one who left the Methodist ministry, and joined that of the Congregationalists. This witness says that he can, "at any time, bring forward cases, in which Methodist preachers have received the notes of circuit stewards on interest for the balance of the salary for the year in cases where it has not been promptly paid." But such a course is contrary to both the spirit and the letter of the Discipline, which expressly provides that "the Church shall not be accountable for the deficiency as in case of debt." I have known but one instance of this being done, and the minister who held the note, and urged its payment, with the rigor of a Shylock, received his education among the Presbyterians, and has, some years ago, left the Methodists and joined the ministry of another denomination, in which salaries are collectible by law. As an example of the opposite

course, my colleague and myself were, at a certain time, about to leave the circuit at the expiration of the year. We called upon the principal steward of the circuit. There had not been money enough collected to meet our claims, although no allowances were made for "fuel and table expenses." The steward said:—"This will not do. We have not been in the habit of sending away our preachers without their claims. We must borrow the money." "No!" said my colleague, who was preacher in charge, "if you had the money, it would be very serviceable, but I cannot consent to leave the circuit to my successor encumbered with such a debt"—and we turned away. That was a hard year for me. A succession of such must have driven me from the "work." But, thank God, I was providentially relieved, as many of my brethren in like circumstances have been.

Mr. Ross is not easily foiled. If it should be proved that many of us "do not receive the full allowance in money from the collections made in the circuit," there still remains "the annual produce of the chartered fund as divided among the several Conferences"—also "the annual dividend arising from the Book Concern," added to all the collections during the year which may be sent to the Conference. A brief statement is sufficient to place this matter in its true light. At the last Philadelphia Conference the entire amount received from all sources was \$4168 87. This was divided among forty-nine claimants, all of whom, excepting seven, received nothing from the churches, during the whole year, but their dividend of this sum, which, if equally divided, would give but little over \$80 to each claimant. Some of these claimants are old men, worn out in the service of the church. Others, disabled men, with families. Others, aged widows, and others, younger widows, with several children depending upon them. The Conference funds, so far from being available for the deficiencies of the effective preachers, are *rarely* sufficient to meet the claims of those who are entirely dependent upon them.

There remains yet another argument upon this point. Mr. Ross infers that the Methodist preachers receive all their allowance, from the fact that "they are in the land of the living, and are ready to shout 'great is Methodism.'" "Now," (says he,) "the starving never shout, and men never hurrah

over an empty corn crib." He has again laid infidelity under obligations to him. Just think of the hypocrisy of the Apostles, affecting to have "suffered the loss of all things," and yet in the land of the living, and ever ready to shout "great is Christianity!" Shame on you, Paul! *You* pretend to have been "in hunger, in thirst, in fastings often!" The starving never shout. Men never hurrah over an empty corn crib.

The grand distinction of the Methodist plan of ministerial support is, that while it names, for the reasons already given, a small and usually inadequate sum, and leaves it wholly to the members of each church to decide whether any addition shall be made to it, or what; and provides that neither what is named in the Discipline, nor appropriated by the estimating Committee shall be collectible by law; and thus puts it wholly out of the power of the preacher to make oppressive exactions; or to make the promise or payment of any sum the condition of his serving any particular church; it also puts it in the power of our people to support their preachers just as well as they are able and disposed to do. We think it a good plan, preferable, on the whole, to that of any other denomination. We are confident that where our people are able to support us, and we do our duty, entitling ourselves to their confidence and affection, they will not suffer us to want. If they are not able, they are not to blame, and we expect to suffer with them. Our plan is not so favorable to obtaining large salaries, as that in which the minister stipulates with the congregation. On the other hand, as a result of our itinerancy, a minister, able to do effective service, is never without a church and a support of some kind. Multitudes of Presbyterian ministers, who are settled but a few years at a time, and in connection with small churches, or can obtain no settlement at all, but are obliged to spend their time, and their money, if they have any, in going about as candidates for settlement, may well think the condition of most Methodist preachers superior to theirs.

Mr. Ross also asserts that "Methodist preachers have it in their power to control the business of the Methodist people to a great and alarming extent." The proof of this he finds in the fact that those who continue in the church are expected to evidence their desire of salvation "by doing good espe-

cially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business; and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only." He comments upon this in his usual style:—"Yes! a Methodist can be made to feel he is giving evidence of a desire for salvation, by trading with a Methodist seeker, in preference to a Baptist, Episcopalian, Lutheran or Presbyterian Christian? Is that possible? Yes. Rub your eyes, or put on your spectacles—Read again. Yes: there it is—no mistake. Well, is it not a fearful and far-reaching article? No wonder there are so many 'seekers' in the Methodist Church; no wonder there are so many 'groaning' all their lives to be of the household of faith, and never get in."

This unprincipled vituperation is without even the shadow of a foundation. The clause of the Discipline referred to, does not require that Methodists should be preferred in business to Christians of other sects. It merely requires that we "*prefer Christians*"—"those who are of the household of faith," &c.—giving as the reason that "the world will love its own." What shall we say of the man who can wilfully distort this Scriptural rule, and hold it up as the occasion of bitter reproach to a large body of Christians? If, in the practice of Mr. Ross, the end do not sanctify the means, it is certain that the means are not likely to sanctify the end.

NO. XIV.

THE use which Mr. Ross makes of his position that Methodism is a great money power, is thus indicated:—"In view of these facts, we will learn why the tendency of Methodism has ever been to swell its numbers with or without piety; why the ministry in that church may be sought by worldly men for the loaves and fishes in the church, and in the world; and finally, that Methodism, in this respect, as well as in others, is a dangerous power to the piety and peace of the community."

Because the Methodist Church does not require, as a con-

dition of membership, a consciousness of being justified and regenerated, but receives into its communion those who have a sincere desire to flee the wrath to come, and evidence this desire by bringing forth works meet for repentance, an extensive effort is made to prejudice it before the community, by representing it as seeking to swell its numbers by the admission of unconverted persons. This objection derives all its plausibility from the fact that the parties use the term *converted* in different senses. The Calvinists—and in this class we include the Presbyterians of both schools, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, and some Protestant Episcopalians—regard repentance as conclusive evidence of regeneration. The Methodists do not. They regard it as something preliminary and prerequisite to regeneration—as a transition state. Hence, while they think it right to receive true penitents into their fellowship, they do not encourage such to think themselves converted in the sense of *justified and regenerated* until the Spirit of God witnesses with their spirits that such is the case. So that the unconverted persons, for receiving whom we are made to suffer reproach, are such as the objectors would at once pronounce converted. And many such enter the ministry of other denominations without any suspicion that their experience is defective—prepared to stigmatize, as fanaticism, those attainments which Methodists hold to be yet necessary to thorough conversion. It is worthy of remark that those who are deemed eligible to church membership in the Methodist E. Church have no difficulty in obtaining admission to the communion of any other denomination. Methodist certificates have always been at par. And there is one peculiarity in our mode of receiving members which should protect us from the suspicion of an eagerness to swell our numbers “with or without piety.” All who join us, unless they present certificates of membership from evangelical churches, are required to remain six months on trial. *No one, coming from the world, can obtain membership with us, in less than six months from the time of application.*—Whereas they might be admitted to full membership among the Baptists on the very day on which they profess conversion, and to the Presbyterian and Congregational churches on the very next communion day. And, notwithstanding the rapid increase of our membership, exciting both the astonish-

ment and the jealousy of other sects, we refuse to admit to full membership vast numbers who would be admitted, without hesitancy, by the objectors. *No denomination guards the door of the church so carefully as the Methodists, and none exercises so rigid a discipline over its members.*

Mr. Ross finds the secret of our disposition to swell our numbers, "with or without piety," in the fact that we are "a great trading company." The more members, the better sale for our books. All our pretended effort to save souls is a purely mercenary operation. "What matters it to Methodist preachers," says he, "whether those who buy disciplines, hymn books, and papers, are Christians or not?" To illustrate and confirm this very charitable saying, he gives "a fact from one to be trusted," who reports that "he found, in a ride of twelve miles, six Methodist families without the Bible, and yet *all had the hymn book*, and some also the Discipline." To this he adds:—"The circuit preacher, you see, sold all these books, at great profit. But he could not encumber his saddle bags with the Bible. He makes nothing on Bibles. The American Bible Society furnishes these." It may be true that so many Methodist families were found without the Bible, but I can believe nothing upon the testimony of Mr. Ross. They may have been very recently received upon trial as the fruit of a revival. In such case they would naturally desire to possess those books which were necessary, the one to enable them to join with the congregation in singing the praises of God, the other to inform them of the doctrines and government of the church inviting them to its fellowship. But, at a distance from a book store, they could procure those books of the preacher only. I will venture to insinuate that the Presbyterian Confession of Faith is not so likely to be found in the hands of recent converts among the Presbyterians. Besides, if a Presbyterian agent of the A. B. S. was employed, partly at the expense of the Methodists, to supply the destitute of that region with Bibles, with what reason could the Methodist preachers be required to fill their saddlebags with them?

As to the Methodist ministry being "sought by worldly men, for the loaves and fishes," there are certain facts which speak a very significant language. Multitudes of the members of other denominations have come over to Methodism, attracted

by its doctrines and its spiritual privileges, and a very considerable number of Methodist preachers have joined the Protestant Episcopalians and the Presbyterians; but few, very few, indeed, have come from the ministry of those churches to ours, in quest of the loaves and fishes. No! No! Turning up their nostrils to the breezes, they have scented the savory odors from other directions, and, true to their instincts, have traced them to their sources, and there sat down.

But the great object of Mr. Ross is to render Methodism odious to the community at large, by representing it as a despotism, and therefore dangerous to the liberties of the country. To effect this, he has resorted to the most disgraceful misrepresentations. A very singular despotism that must be, indeed, the subjects of which become such at pleasure, at mature age, and with an entire unconsciousness of surrendering any of the rights of American citizens; who have to be persuaded of the fact of their oppression by the artful harangues of those who seek to proselyte them; whose rulers cannot become such, in any instance, without their consent, and are all held responsible for their governmental acts; who not only are not taxed, but can withhold their money, refusing to give a cent in support of this despotism, without subjecting themselves to any penalty, civil or ecclesiastical; who can withdraw from its jurisdiction at pleasure, and who, if in good standing, are never denied certificates commending them to the fellowship of other communions.

There is one fact worthy of special note. The men who represent the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church as reduced to the most abject servility by their rulers—as having no more freedom than the spindles of a cotton factory, whirled incessantly by the wheels and drums and belts which bring the motive power to bear upon them, hold, at the same time, that God, from all eternity, decreed whatsoever comes to pass, including, of course, every peculiarity in the structure and movements of Methodism, and that he brings to pass, in some way or other, everything which he has decreed, and yet if a Methodist dares to infer from these propositions that man is not strictly and properly a free agent, he is not only considered devoid of logical acumen, but stigmatized as a slanderer. How man can be free while God foreordains and brings to pass his every volition and action with every event

connected therewith, and yet his freedom be wholly destroyed by just so many of the divine decrees and providences as are involved in the peculiarities of Methodism, is a problem which I am much too "green" to solve. I offer it for solution to the very sapient Mr. Ross and Dr. Converse.

But Methodism is dangerous to the interests of civil and religious liberty! And yet, with all his fuss and fury, Mr. Ross can point to no act in the administration of Methodism calculated to awaken the suspicion of the most keen-eyed statesman or politician. Hitherto the danger has been seen by none but bigoted proselyters. And, even with them, the whole cause of alarm is, as yet, to be found in the organic structure of Methodism, not in any movements looking towards a political result. Mr. Ross is compelled to be purely prophetic in relation to its baleful influences. I have felt prompted to commend to him a caution which the Rev. Robert Hall addressed to an opponent:—"I would not," said that eloquent writer, "have Mr. ——— indulge too freely in these visions, lest the fire and illumination of the prophet should put out the reason of the man; a caution the more necessary in the present instance, as it glimmers so feebly already in some parts of his discourses that its extinction would not be at all extraordinary." It is truly wonderful that a knowledge of the history of Presbyterianism should be insufficient to teach some of its ministers and members a little modesty and caution. Methodism has never been guilty of intolerance towards other sects. Presbyterianism has. Her hands are stained with blood. Mr. Breckenbridge, in his controversy with Bishop Hughes, had to make humiliating concessions, such, for instance, as these—"I owned, that formerly Presbyterians had *persecuted*, but *his church exceedingly more*," see Discussion, page 337. "Early in the debate I distinctly declared that I considered *our fathers* in Europe mistaken in some of their views of 'religious liberty;' and that, at this day, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, like the Episcopal Church in England, was most seriously wrong, in *permitting*, and still more, in *cherishing* a *union* with the state; that American Presbyterians, like American Episcopalians, had renounced that system as *contrary to liberty* and the *word of God*," p 373. But enough of this. I have no disposition to retort. Intolerance is repudiated and condemned by the

constitutions of both schools of Presbyterians in the United States.

But while American Presbyterians, as a body, take a noble stand in behalf of civil and religious freedom, there are individuals among them,—how many I have no means of determining,—in whom the spirit of intolerance is rife. I come now to the worst part of Mr. Ross's assault. He expresses astonishment that Methodism is tolerated. In his first article, we find the following exclamation: "And this system is lauded by those who wield as worthy of all eulogy! 'This is said in the United States—and American freemen—not foreign Roman Catholics, *tolerate*, ay, "submit to the usurpation." Will it be replied that he does not object to its being tolerated, but merely wonders at the forbearance of the people? I reply, he, in his third number, which he dedicates to "Judges and Lawyers," invokes the interposition of the magistracy to put it down. "We call," he says, "upon the Methodists to overturn this despotism. But if they will not hear—we then call upon the guardians of our civil and religious rights to speak out, everywhere, until the people shall understand this usurpation, and arrest it." I rejoice in being able to oppose to him, at this point, the constitution of his own church. Presbyterians have been suspected of a desire that their church should be established by law. As a people, they are fully vindicated. But there are men among them, such as Mr. Ross, Dr. Converse, and certain "fathers and elders" residing in Philadelphia, with the synod of Athens in Tennessee, who are evidently anxious to effect this result. And yet these men pretend, all the while, to be champions of republicanism and liberty. They seek to divert attention from their own machinations by charging them upon others. They would not be satisfied with enjoying state patronage, because that does not necessarily imply the suppression of other sects. England, with its established church, grants toleration to dissenters. They would introduce into the American government the principle of John Knox, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, that "It is not only lawful to punish to the death such as labor to subvert the true religion, but the magistrates and people are bound to do so, unless they will provoke the wrath of God against themselves,"—a principle which has deluged other countries with blood, and would soon criminate

with blood the soil of this now free and happy land. For, can any one suppose that the proscribed party would keep still? No! In despite of the most rigid espionage, they would form plans and conspiracies, and would assert their rights by dint of muscle and steel. And, having put down their oppressors, this principle would require that they should keep them down by proscription. This would ensure another bloody revolt. Thus would power be continually changing hands amid prodigies of crime and horror. Thanks be to God, and to the enlightened and patriotic fathers of this republic, this principle was properly estimated, and allowed no place in our excellent system of government, although it lingered awhile among the Puritans of New England, under the protection of state sovereignty, and exemplified its tendencies by cropping, whipping and hanging the inoffensive Quakers. But its patrons were finally compelled by public opinion to disown and eject it. So long as the churches of America continue to repudiate it, we have nothing to fear; but let any one of them gain power and introduce it, for their own aggrandizement, into the administration of the civil government, and we have everything to fear. I call upon Presbyterians to mark these men. They are traitors to American Presbyterianism and American republicanism. They stand confessed and self-branded. The mark is upon their guilty foreheads.

Should these miscreants succeed in making the impression that Presbyterians generally sympathize with them in their view, the result will be that other denominations, besides the Methodists, will see themselves in danger, and all will unite in self-defence. At present, when a candidate is presented for the presidency, or any other civil office, the people do not inquire whether he is a Presbyterian, or a Protestant Episcopalian, or a Methodist. But there must be a change in this respect as soon as any sect commits itself to intolerant principles. I am utterly astonished at the infatuation of these men. If the Roman Catholics entertain such designs, they have sagacity enough to keep them secret. But these Presbyterians openly avow themselves. All this does not shake my confidence in the political soundness of the members of the American Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Converse persists in the silly pretence that the articles of Mr. Ross are not an *attack* upon the Methodist Episcopal

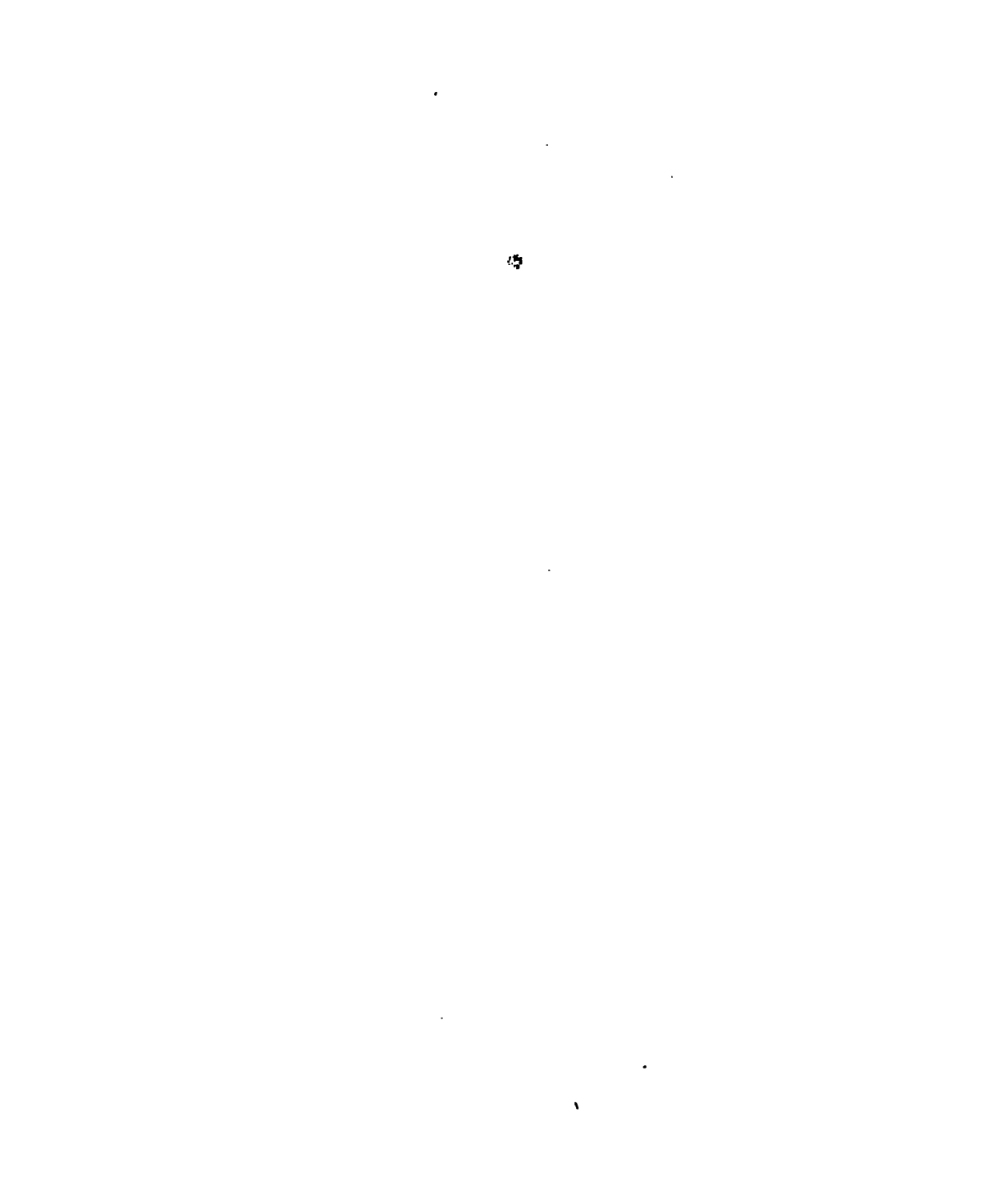
Church; but he, nevertheless, finds it necessary to apologize to his own people for publishing them, and undertakes to make it appear that they were provoked. For this purpose he quotes a passage from the Rev. Mr. Brownlow, and publishes a letter in which Methodist preachers, at the West, are charged with speaking evil of Calvinism. Now, in respect to Mr. Brownlow, we would note that first, that he is not an itinerant preacher; secondly, that he is a political editor; thirdly, his remarks were published by his own press; fourthly, that they were not copied into any of our denominational papers; and fifthly, that he was replying to Mr. Ross. As to severe remarks upon Calvinism, the Rev. Dr. Cox of Brooklyn, L. I., in a sermon preached at the opening of the recent New School General Assembly in Cincinnati, pronounced Arminianism "a system of chance, as absurd as ever sickened the imagination of a fool."

The circumstances under which Dr. Converse published the first article of Mr. Ross, deserve a moment's notice. A revival was in progress in several of the Methodist churches of this city, and Bishop Hamline, whose name was used disparagingly by Mr. Ross, was then upon a visit to this city, and preaching with great acceptability and usefulness. The whole movement appeared as if designed to prevent the converts from joining the church whose labors had been instrumental in their conversion to God. This publication, although it gave great pain to many, was suffered to pass without reply, except a few kind editorial remonstrances against breaking the peace of the churches. This silence was misconstrued, and several months after, the assault was renewed, by publishing articles still more offensive. The Methodists then waked up. In obedience to a sense of duty, I entered the lists in defence of our beloved but injured economy; with what success, others must judge.

THE END.

E R R A T A.

For the estimate at the bottom of page 92 read :—				-
Annual allowance for the preacher,	-	-	-	\$100
do do for his wife,	-	-	-	100
do do for say 2 children, above 7 years				
		of age, each \$24,	-	48
do do for say 3 children, under 7, each				
		\$16,	-	48
do do house rent and heavy furniture,				
		estimated at	-	45
do do table expenses and fuel, estimated at				234
do do traveling expenses estimated at				25
				<hr/>
				\$600
The above does not include the entertainment of the preacher and his horse while from home on his circuit, which must be at least				
	-	-	-	100
				<hr/>
				\$700



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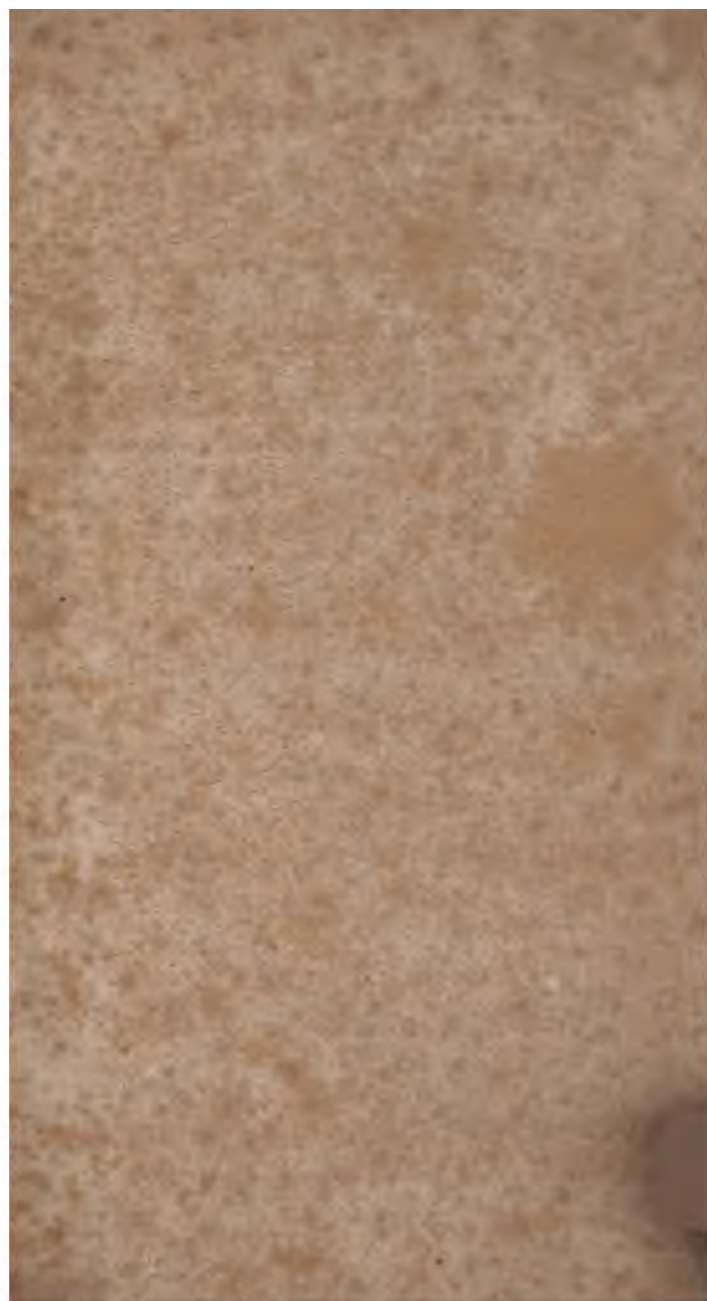
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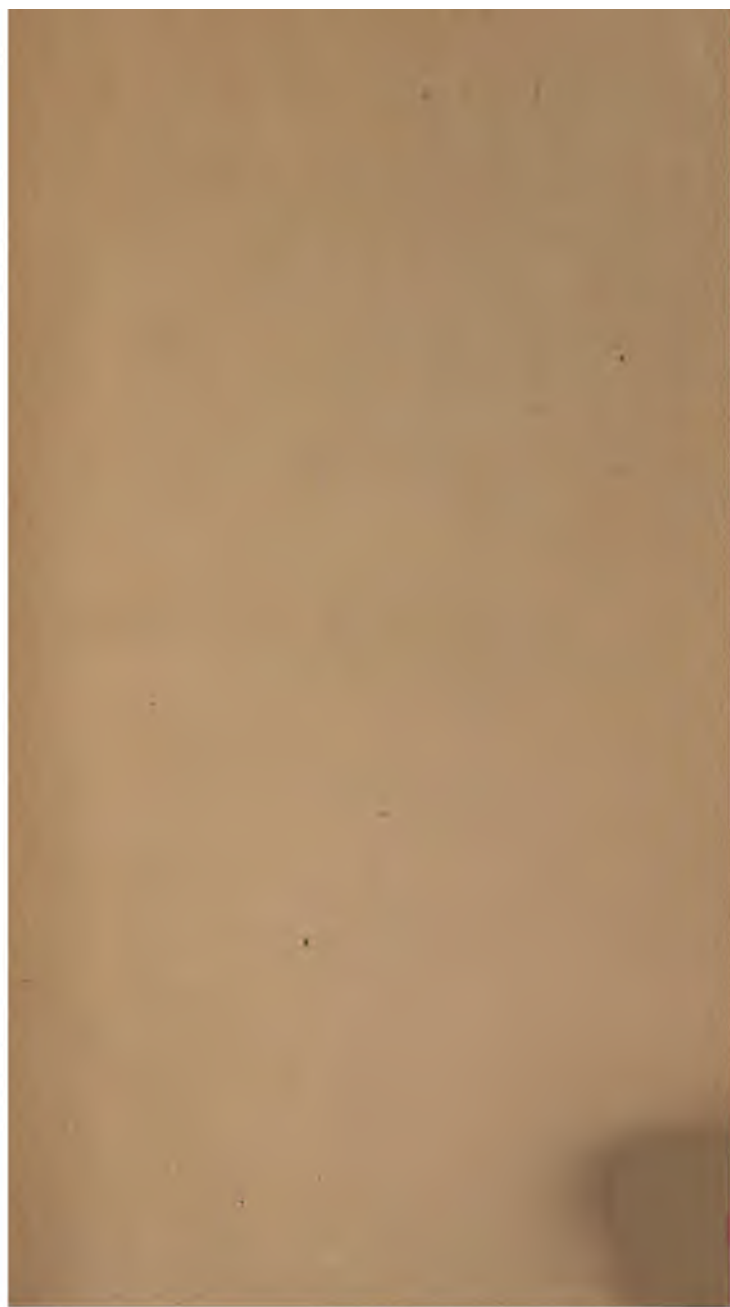
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